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REMARKABLE RECOVERY RATE MAY LEAD TO HONU DELISTING, LOCAL MANAGEMENT

When George Balazs, head of the Marine Turtle Research Program, began counting Hawaiian green turtles at East Island in 1973, he found only 67 nesting females.

Last year, he and colleagues at National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center estimated that 843 green turtles (called honu in Hawaiian) nested on East Island.

Located in French Frigate Shoals, East Island accounts for about half of all honu nesting in the Hawaiian Islands. The archipelagic-wide number of females nesting last year was likely around 1,700.

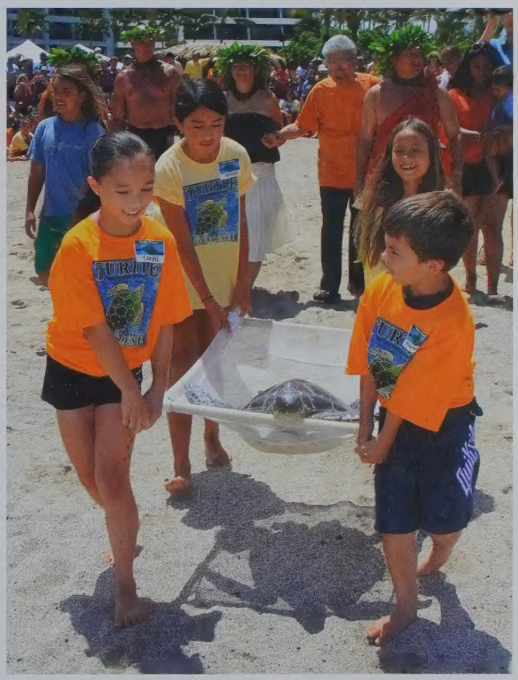
The total honu population in Hawai'i coastal waters is estimated at 61,000. Not included are the hatchling and juvenile honu to about age 6. During those early years, they are thought to go through an oceanic life stage before settling into coastal waters for the remainder of their lives.

The remarkable rebound commenced when threats such as commercial harvesting and habitat destruction at nesting grounds were eliminated. Destructive military activities at French Frigate Shoals, which began in the 1930s, ceased in the 1950s. Commercial harvesting of honu, which began in the 1940s, was prohibited by the State of Hawai'i in 1974. The State also required permits for harvest in the main Hawaiian Islands for household consumption. Hawai'i later further protected honu under Administrative Rules 13-124, which lists green turtle as "indigenous wildlife" and prohibits its catching, injuring, killing or selling.

In 1978 the federal government listed green sea turtles worldwide under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The breeding populations in Florida and the Pacific coast of Mexico were listed as endangered; elsewhere the species was listed as threatened.

Honu have increased at a rate of nearly 6 percent per year and may now be over 80 percent of the pre-exploitation level. Biological delisting criteria in the Recovery Plan for US Pacific Populations of the Green Turtle, such as "nesting population at source beaches are either stable or increasing over a 25-year monitoring period," have been well exceeded.

These findings led the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs (AOHCC) to file a petition in February 2012 to remove the honu from the ESA list. Delisting of the honu would ultimately move management of the species from the federal government back to the local government.



Since 1989, the Mauna Lani Bay Resort has raised and released more than 200 honu, a species of cultural significance to Native Hawaiians. Photo courtesy of Mauna Lani Bay Hotel.

Part of the AOHCC argument is that the honu is a distinct population segment (DPS), the smallest division of a species under ESA. All honu nest in the Hawai'i archipelago, and tagging studies show that the adults remain near the Hawaiian Islands.

On Aug. 1, 2012, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a 90-day finding that the petition presented substantial scientific information indicating that the honu may be a DPS and eligible for removal from the ESA list.

NMFS is now proceeding with a status review to determine whether the delisting is warranted. The public has until Oct. 1, 2012, to provide comments.

Continued on page 2

Ecosystem-based Management of Fisheries in the US Pacific Islands

The Council was established by Congress in 1976 to manage marine resources and maintain opportunities for sustainable domestic fishing in the US exclusive economic zone waters and high seas around Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the eight US Pacific remote island areas.

www.wpcouncil.org

Hawai'i Ranks High in Fisheries of the US Report

On Sept. 19, 2012, NOAA released the summary survey on US recreational and commercial fishery landings for 2011.

For recreational fisheries, Hawai'i is sixth in the nation for landed volume by weight.

For commercial fisheries, Hawai'i is 10th in terms of landed value.

For the full report, go to www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2012/09/09_19_12fisheries_of_the_us.html

Hawai'i Revives Aha Moku System

Gov. Abercrombie signs into law recognition of the Aha Moku system and the establishment of the Aha Moku Advisory Committee, surrounded by supporters from the Native Hawaiian community.

Communities now have an opportunity to fully participate in the management of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

On July 9, 2012, Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed into law Act 288, which formally recognizes the Aha Moku as the traditional natural resource management system of Hawai'i and creates an Aha Moku Advisory Committee, placed in the Department of Land and Natural Resources, to advise the Board of Land and Natural Resources. The eight-member committee will be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate from a list of nominations submitted by the Aha Moku Councils of each island.

A moku is a traditional division of land and ocean that is based on natural contours and the natural resource needs of the community within the moku. Each mokupuni (island) differs in the number of moku it has and the structure of its Aha Moku Council.

The Aha Moku system can make management more adaptive, improve community consultation, increase the recognition and use of traditional knowledge, and enhance education and civic responsibility. Now the work begins. To get started, contact the Aha Moku representative for your moku or mokupuni and/or visit ahamoku.org (see list on page 3).

Remarkable Recovery Rate May Lead to Honu Delisting

Continued from page 1

Opposition is expected from some environmentalists who argue that the population has yet to reach 5,000 females nesting annually, which they say is one of the criteria in the Recovery Plan. However, the actual wording in the Recovery Plan states "Each stock must average 5,000 (*or a biologically reasonable estimate* based on the goal of maintaining a stable population in perpetuity) females estimated to nest annually (FENA) over six years."

Sen. Daniel Akaka (right) was one of the dignitaries who released six baby honu into the Pacific Ocean on July 4, 2012. Also pictured is his son Daniel Akaka Jr., director of cultural affairs at Mauna Lani Bay Hotel. Photo courtesy of Mauna Lani Bay Hotel.

The Recovery Plan does not provide scientific justification to support 5,000 FENA as an appropriate target for the Hawai'i population. In fact, recent studies suggest that the population is likely limited by foraging ground capacity.

Researchers have documented foraging grounds in Hawai'i that are approaching carrying capacity and where turtles are exhibiting slowed growth and poor health. Reaching for an arbitrary recovery target of 5,000 FENA may be unrealistic for a healthy honu population.

According to the ESA timeline, a 12-month finding based on the status review (and proposed rule if applicable) is due February 2013 and a final rule one year after, i.e., by February 2014.

Honu will remain protected under Hawai'i State law regardless of the delisting outcome. According to the Recovery Plan, a honu management plan is to be in force at the time of delisting to ensure the population remains healthy. Under ESA requirements, NMFS and US Fish and Wildlife Service must monitor delisted species in collaboration with the State for at least five years.

Honu congregate near Olowalu Point, Maui, to have their shells cleaned by algae-eating fish. These "cleaning stations" are now commonly seen throughout the main Hawaiian Islands. Photo courtesy of Noboru Chikira

Aha Moku Councils

Mokupuni & Moku Contacts

Moku O Keawe (Big Island)

Acting Po'o: Pi'ilani Kaawaloa (punatita7@yahoo.com)
Ka'u: Darlyne Vierra, Elizabeth Kuluwaimaka
Puna: Elaine Hauanio
Hilo: Herman and Debra Ann Costa (ua_jr@live.com)
Hamakua: Wesley Murakane (gotfish87@gmail.com)
Kona: Phil Fernandez (philferna@gmail.com), Arthur Mahi
Kohala: vacant

Moku O Kahekili (Maui)

Po'o: Keeaumoku Kapu (keeaunoku.kapu@gmail.com)
Hamakuapoko, Jamie Fernandes,
Wailuku: Clyde Kahalehau, Foster Ampong
Kula: Timmy Bailey
Kaupo: Aloha Smith
Kaanapali: Felimon Sadang
Kipahulu: John Lind
Lahaina: Kamaka Brancoco
Kahikinui: Donna Sterling
Hana: Robert Malaikini (malaikini@hotmail.com)
Koolau: Kyle Nakanelua
Hamakualoa: Joycelyn Costa

Moku O Kanaloa (Kaho'olawe)

Po'o: Leslie Kuloloia (pokaiuli@yahoo.com), Robert Luuwai (rluuwai@hotmail.com)
Honuaula: Tanya Lee Greig

Nana'i Kaula (Lana'i)

Acting Po'o: Kainoa Kanno (kainobe2hotmail.com)
Kona/Koolau George Purdy (worldcat30 @gmail.com), Nina Brown (nmbjr@gmail.com)

Moloka'i Pule O'o (Moloka'i)

Acting Po'o: Kamalu Poepoe (karenpoepoe@yahoo.com)
Kaluakoi: Byron Espaniola, Joe Kalipi
Pala'au: Wayde Lee (walee@ymail.com)
Kawela: Mervyn Dudoit Sr.
Mana'e: Palmer Naki
Halawa: Mahinahou Ross
Ko'olau: Ruth Manu
Resource Management Chair: Mac Poepoe
Culture Chair: 'Opu'ulani Albino
Education Chair: Kamalu Poepoe
Planning Chair: Walter Ritte Jr.

Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu)

Po'o: Rocky Kaluhiwa (rockyfromheeia@aol.com)
Ko'olaupoko: Rocky and Jerry Kaluhiwa
Ko'olauloa: Ululani Beirne-Keawe (ululani2008@ hawaiiantel.net)
Wai'anae: Carl Jellings (EOD1989@aol.com)
Ewa: Henry Changwo
Wailua: vacant
Kona: vacant

Mano O Kalanipo (Kaua'i)

Po'o: Sharon Pomroy (pomroys001@hawaii.rr.com)
Halele'a/Napali: Tommy HashimotoKona: Billy Kaohelaulii (terryhayes@gmail.com),
Kane Turalde (kaneswahine@aol.com)Puna: Cheryl Lovell-Obatake (puna_moku@ hotmail.com)
Ko'olau: Kalehua Ham Young

Ni'ihau Kahele Lani (Ni'iahau)

Konohiki: Keith and Bruce Robinson (niihauisland@ hawaiiantel.net)

Fishery Management Focus Shifts to Marine Mammals

For years, management of Hawai'i's pelagic fisheries was tied to the management of sea turtles and sea birds. Fishing was restricted to keep interactions with these species within acceptable limits. Through cooperative research among the industry, researchers and resource managers, interactions between these protected species and Hawai'i's longline fishery has been reduced by more than 90 percent. Now the management focus is on reducing Hawai'i fishery interactions with marine mammals.

False Killer Whales

False killer whales are large members of the dolphin family. Three stocks have been documented to occur around Hawai'i: Hawai'i insular, Hawai'i pelagic and Palmyra Atoll. The Hawai'i pelagic and insular stocks occupy different geographical areas (with some overlap) and have some genetic differences. Yet both stocks are comprised of individuals that look the same, and both are a concern for fishermen, environmentalists and resource managers.

In 2009, a False Killer Whale Take Reduction Plan (TRP) was initiated under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) when the average number of interactions with Hawai'i pelagic false killer whales in the Hawai'i deep-set longline fishery was estimated at 7.4 animals per year. At that time, the potential biological removal (PBR) was determined to be 2.5. Under the MMPA, the PBR is the maximum number of animals that may be removed annually from a stock while maintaining a sustainable population. A "take" or an "interaction" that is counted against the PBR is one which results in a "serious injury" or a mortality. Almost all false killer whale interactions in the Hawai'i longline fisheries result in the animal being released alive, and most of those interactions are categorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) as "serious injuries."

The proposed TRP published by NMFS on July 18, 2011, included regulatory and non-regulatory measures to reduce false killer whale mortalities and serious injuries attributed to the Hawai'i longline fishery to below the PBR level.

The final rule is overdue. In the mean time, a new abundance estimate for the Hawai'i pelagic false killer whales has been published, tripling the previous population estimate.

According to the draft 2012 stock assessment report (SAR), released on Aug. 7, there are 1,503 individuals in the pelagic stock based on a 2010 survey conducted around the Hawai'i archipelago. The previous estimate of 484 individuals was based on a 2002 survey. The substantial increase from 484 to 1,503 has been attributed to an improved survey design intended to increase encounter rates, although NMFS has also indicated that the new abundance may be an overestimate because some animals may have been attracted to the vessel. The new abundance estimates in the NMFS's draft SAR is open for public comment until Nov. 5, 2012 (www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/sars/draft.htm).

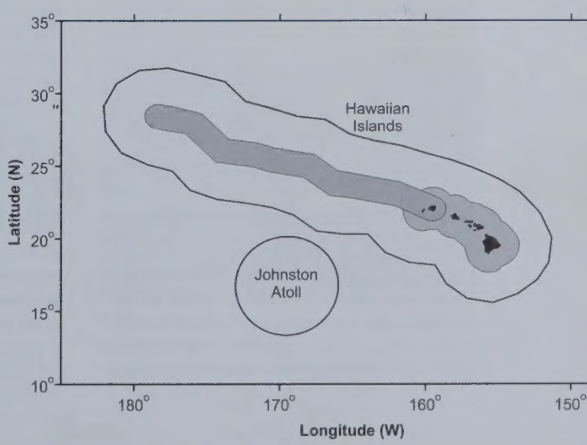
Pelagic stock: *22 nautical miles (nm) from the main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) shoreline out to the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ) boundary (200 nm from shore) around MHI.*

Insular stock: *Coastal areas around the MHI out to 75 nm from shore (gray shaded area). The core area in which the whales spend most of their time is considered to be up to 22 nm from shore.*

Overlap Zone for pelagic and insular stocks: *22 nm to 75 nm from shore around the MHI is occupied by both insular and pelagic stocks.*

NWHI stock (in draft 2012 SAR): *50 nm boundary equivalent to the Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument and extending eastward to Kaua'i*

False Killer Whale Habitat around Hawai'i



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Fishery Management Focus Shifts to Marine Mammals

Continued from page 3

Based on the new abundance estimates, the new PBR for the pelagic stock is 9.1 whales per year. Despite the improved abundance estimate and PBR, the longline fishery continues to be subject to the TRP process because NMFS has re-estimated the average number of interactions in the pelagic stock to 13.6. The increase is mainly due to the addition of "unidentified blackfish" in the total number of false killer whale takes.

The draft 2012 SAR also reveals a previously unknown group of false killer whales called the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) stock. This new stock was documented in near-shore waters of the NWHI during the 2010 survey and is thought to inhabit waters within 50 nautical miles of the NWHI (see map on page 3). The NWHI stock has an overlapping range around Kaua'i and Ni'ihau with the previously described Hawai'i insular stock. According to the draft 2012 SAR, the NWHI stock has an estimated population of 552, while the Hawai'i insular stock is estimated at 151 individuals. Although genetic, photo-identification and telemetry studies have so far found some separation between the NWHI and Hawai'i insular stocks, the two stocks appear to share similar behavioral and ecological settings that were previously thought to be unique to the Hawai'i insular stock inhabiting main Hawaiian Islands waters.

The Hawai'i insular stock of false killer whales was proposed as an endangered distinct population segment under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in November 2010, prior to the documentation of the NWHI stock. Recognizing that the new information may be relevant to the final determination of the ESA listing, NMFS reopened public comment period for a limited 15 days on Sept. 18. 2012 (http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/PRD/prd_false_killer_whale.html). Meanwhile, the final determination has been overdue since November 2011, which led the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) to file a lawsuit in May 2012 to force NMFS to make a final decision.

The primary range of the Hawai'i insular stock is in a longline exclusion zone. No interactions with the longline fishery have been confirmed.

North Pacific Humpback Whale

North Pacific humpback whales are at a historically high population level. Prior to commercial whaling, their population is estimated to have been around 15,000 individuals. Today, it is estimated to exceed 21,000, according a 2011 paper published in *Marine Mammal Science*, based on the SPLASH project. SPLASH (Structures of Population, Levels of Abundance and Status of Humpback Whales) is an international cooperative research project developed to understand the abundance, population structure and potential human impacts on humpback whales across the North Pacific Ocean.

Approximately half of the North Pacific population is thought to migrate to Hawai'i to mate and calve. Typically the arrival of the first whale is reported in October. However, the first sighting last year was reported in September and this year, in August.

As the number of whales increase, unexpected behaviors have also been reported in Alaska, noted John Moran of NOAA Alaska Fisheries Science Center. Some whales are staying in Alaska during the winter and continuing to feed throughout the winter (possibly because they are not getting enough food to make the annual migration). One female reportedly became pregnant while remaining in Alaska.

Moran was one of four speakers at the Fishers Forum on managing for recovery of the North Pacific humpback whale held June 27, 2012, in Honolulu. The Forum was hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council as part of its 154th Council meeting.

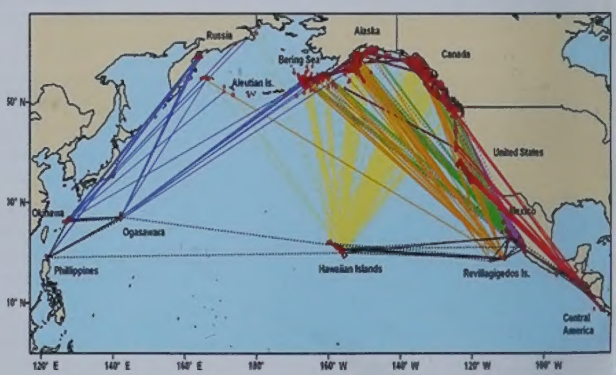
Moran reported that, in Alaska, humpbacks on average consume 0.4 tons of food per day per animal. Based on that figure, the consumption of the entire North Pacific population would be equivalent to that of 7.5 million people.

Some of the whales are eating herring. The presence of the whales are changing the behavior of herring, making them more vulnerable to predation by birds, seals and sea lions. Scientific research conducted by Moran and colleagues suggests that humpback predation on herring in Prince Williams Sound may be suppressing herring stock recovery.

A few humpbacks have figured out that salmon enhancement facilities are a good place to find food, as the newly released salmon smelt stay in the hatchery area for some time and are not use to predators. One hatchery owner lost about 80 percent of one year's smelt to two humpback whale gulps.

Fishermen attending the Forum expressed concerns that humpback whales may be feeding in Hawai'i's waters. As early as 1989, a researcher photo-documented a sub-adult humpback whale apparently feeding on mackerel off Maui. Opportunistic feeding by humpback whales in their winter breeding grounds or migratory routes have also been documented in the South Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, although the frequency at which such events occur are unknown.

Following up on fishermen's concerns, the Council recommended that NMFS investigate if whales are feeding in Hawai'i's waters, and if so, what they are eating and how much. In response, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) reviewed available information and concluded that feeding behavior in breeding grounds is a rare event and the amount of fish consumed would be negligible. In its July 2012 informational sheet to the Council, PIFSC noted that humpbacks commonly exhibit behavior similar to bubble-net feeding during the winter as displays of male dominance or during courtship behavior, and these may be mistaken as feeding behavior.



Migration between foraging and breeding sites for the North Pacific humpback whales (Barlow et al. 2011).

Pantropical Spotted Dolphins

The proposed 2012 List of Fisheries (LOF) published June 28, 2011, considered reclassifying Hawai'i's troll and charter fisheries from Category III (occasional incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals) to Category II (frequent

incidental mortality and serious injury of marine mammals). The proposal was largely based on anecdotal information of hooking of pantropical spotted dolphins and incorrect assumptions about the fisheries and their fishing method.

In the final 2012 LOF published on Nov. 29, 2011, NMFS did not elevate the two fisheries from Category III to II, citing that it needed additional time to analyze the public comments that included information both for and against the reclassification. The proposed 2013 LOF has yet to be published this year.

Monk seals

Final decisions are also pending on two proposed actions by NMFS related to Hawaiian monk seals. These actions were highlighted in the cover story of the Fall 2011 issue of *Pacific Islands Fishery News*.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement analyzed the potential impacts of proposed recovery actions for Hawaiian monk seals. Fishermen expressed concern about the proposal to temporarily relocate pups from the NWHI to the MHI. The public comment period ended on Oct. 17, 2011. A comment analysis report from NMFS was expected to be published during the summer of 2012.

The proposed rule to revise the Hawaiian monk seal critical habitat under the ESA (published on June 2, 2011) was reopened for further public comment for a period of 60 days from Nov. 7, 2011, to Jan. 6, 2012. The existing designation is limited to the NWHI. The proposed rule extends the current designation in the NWHI from 20 fathoms to 273 fathoms and designates six new areas in the MHI. The MHI areas include terrestrial and marine habitat from 5 meters inland from the shoreline seaward to the 500-meter depth contour around the islands, except for certain military areas. The final rule was extended for six months and is expected to be published by Dec. 2, 2012.

Northern Fur Seal

A female northern fur seal, thought to be three to four years old, was found on the North Shore of O'ahu on July 31, 2012. Northern fur seals breed in high latitudes of the North Pacific and Bering Sea and range across the Pacific Ocean between southern California and the Okhotsk Sea and Japan. It is not known how the unexpected visitor ended up far beyond its normal range. The seal was transported to California and released back into the wild at Point Reyes on Aug. 23.

Hawai'i Longline Fisheries Get New Swordfish Limits, Clear ESA & MBTA Hurdles

The Hawai'i's deep-set longline fishery targeting tuna and the shallow-set longline fishery targeting swordfish both received good news this year.

Actual interactions* in swordfish fishery since reopening in 2004

Species	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Loggerhead	1	12	17	15	0	3	7	12
Leatherback	1	8	5	5	2	9	8	16
Olive Ridley	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0
Green	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4

* Based on 100% observer coverage

For the deep-set fishery, it was the implementation of new swordfish limits on Aug. 27, 2012. Under the new rule, there is no trip limit on swordfish landed when a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) observer is on board the vessel. When there is no NMFS observer on board, the limit is 25 swordfish landed or possessed per trip if the vessel uses only circle hooks or 10 swordfish if the vessel uses any hooks other than circle hooks.

The new rule replaces a 10 swordfish per fishing trip limit that has been in place for the deep-set fishery since 2001. The intent of the old rule was to discourage shallow-set fishing during a declared deep-set fishing trip. The limit occasionally forced fishermen to discard swordfish caught in excess of the limit. As swordfish stocks are healthy and not subject to overfishing or approaching an overfished condition, the discards resulted in lost economic opportunities and a reduction of fish available to seafood consumers.

For the shallow-set fishery, the good word is that a new biological opinion has determined that the fishery as managed under the 2010 regulations implementing Amendment 18 of the Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the North Pacific loggerhead turtle distinct population segment (DPS). The DPS was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in September 2011. Amendment 18 removed set limits and increased the shallow-set fishery's allowable annual interactions with loggerhead sea turtles.

NMFS announced the findings of the new biological opinion, required by the ESA, on Jan. 30, 2012. The biological opinion also determined that the shallow-set fishery as managed is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of humpback whales or leatherback, olive ridley and green sea turtles nor is it likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat.

NMFS was also required to issue a new incidental take statement (ITS). Risk analyses for loggerhead and leatherback turtles were conducted using two different population variability assessments, the classical approach and climate-based approach, with the latter approach selected to determine the effects of the action. Under the ITS, NMFS anticipates the following annual incidental take levels based on a projected expansion of up to 5,500 sets: one humpback whale and 34 loggerhead, 26 leatherback, two olive ridley and three green sea turtles.

Further good news for the shallow-set fishery is the issuance of a three-year special permit authorizing the incidental take of migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). A notice of the special permit was published in the Federal Register in January 2012, along with a supporting draft Environmental Assessment. Finding that the fishery would have no significant impact on five seabird species including Laysan and black-footed albatross, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued the permit on Aug. 17, 2012.

A permitting process for marine fishing activities under MBTA did not exist, so NMFS and USFWS developed a special permit for the fishery.

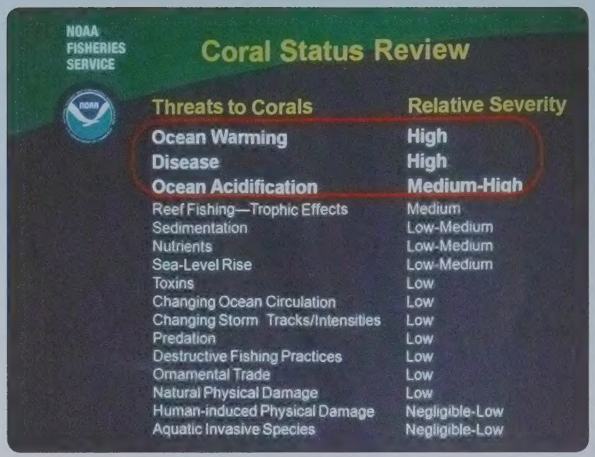
The Hawai'i longline fishery implemented seabird bycatch mitigation measures in 2002, which resulted in over 90 percent reduction in interactions with Laysan and black-footed albatrosses. Today, the shallow-set fishery interacts with an annual average of about 54 Laysan albatrosses and 20 black-footed albatrosses. In contrast, current population estimates for Laysan and black-footed albatrosses are 656,310 and 66,621 breeding pairs, respectively.

NOAA and USFWS issued a special permit for incidental take of migratory birds to the Hawaii shallow-set longline fishery. The fishery interacts annually with approximately 74 albatrosses.

Feds May List 82 Coral Species as Endangered, Threatened

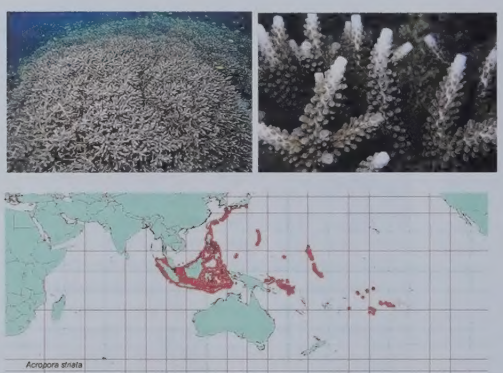
On April 13, 2012, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) released two reports that will form the basis of the decision whether to list 82 species of coral under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Public comments on the *Coral Biological Review Team Status Review Report* (BRT Report) and the *Coral Management Report* were accepted until July 31, 2012. NMFS is required to publish a proposed determination by Dec. 1, 2012.

A petition to list 83 species of coral under the ESA was initially submitted to NMFS by the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2009. NMFS published the 90-day finding on Feb. 10, 2010, announcing that the petitioned action may be warranted for 82 of the species but not for *Oculina varicose*, an Atlantic sub-tropical deepwater coral species.



The NOAA presentation at public meetings reiterates the determination by the status review that fishing is not one of the highest threats to 82 coral species.

Members and advisors of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council reviewed the two reports and raised a number of concerns regarding its conclusions at a number of meetings held since April, including the meetings of Hawai'i the Regional Ecosystem Advisory Committee, Advisory Panel, Scientific and Statistical Committee, the Council and the Council Coordination Committee. Members expressed concerns that global threats such as ocean warming and ocean acidification cannot be addressed through ESA, and listing of coral species under the ESA would have no benefits to the protection of the corals while placing burden on more localized activities such as fishing. Members also noted that local and federal regulations already provide the maximum protection to corals through prohibitions on harvesting coral and "live rock" and the closure of extensive areas of coral reef to fishing.



Acropora striata *is one of 82 candidate species considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The species has a wide distribution in the Indo-Pacific Ocean. Photo source: Vernon, J.E.N. 2000. Corals of the World. Australian Institute of Marine Science. Townsville, Australia. Map source: www.iucnredlist.org.*

While the BRT Report is relatively comprehensive considering the limited time and resources to review 82 candidate species, it highlights the severe lack of scientific information currently available. For example, most available knowledge regarding coral species is limited by the extent of surveys conducted, which are often restricted by safe diving limits (0-20 meters) and accessibility to survey sites. It is, therefore, not surprising that many of the candidate species have shallow depth ranges, and very few are listed as occurring in mesophotic depths that would provide refugia from climatic stressors. The BRT Report also failed to acknowledge a number of recent studies that show coral resilience to climate-based impacts.

The BRT Report examined the status of the 82 candidate coral species and evaluated extinction risk for each of them. The BRT Report identified ocean warming, disease and ocean acidification to pose the greatest threats to coral species, while threats such as sedimentation, nutrient enrichment and fishing were considered to have medium importance. Based on the available scientific information, it was concluded that the status of most of the 82 species are more likely than not to fall below the Critical Risk Threshold, or a level of low abundance at which point extinction is extremely likely.

To read the Council's comment letter in response to the coral reports, go to www.wpcouncil.org/news/index.html.

Although the public review process on the petition ended on July 31, NMFS held a special listening session on Aug. 22, 2012, in American Samoa to solicit public comments, in conjunction with the US Coral Reef Task Force meeting that was convening in the territory that week. All but one of the more than 30 participants at the listening session opposed listing of the 82 coral species.

The participants cited native people's use of coral reefs. They noted that indigenous fishers normally step on coral when harvesting palolo or gleaning, and this may be banned under ESA regulation. Several participants said there are too many federal regulations relating to marine fisheries imposed upon the local community.

The remarks were similar to those heard during the NOAA listening sessions on Saipan on June 18 and Guam on June 20. The majority on Saipan opposed the petition citing more regulations, potential for prohibitions on fishing or harvesting coral for medicinal purpose, lack of necessity for local coral resilience, questionable science, need for more studies and incorporation of local studies, and the bias of the petitioner. It was also noted that protection of corals at Farallon de Medinilla (FDM) is more appropriate and urgent. FDM is an island near Saipan that is used for military bombing practices, despite being the closest prime bottomfish grounds for Saipan fishermen.

American Samoans expressed concern about potential impacts to fishing should coral species become listed under the Endangered Species Act. Photo courtesy of Alice Lawrence.

NMFS, FWS Migratory Bird MoU Includes Council Process

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote the conservation of migratory bird populations, with an emphasis on seabirds. The MoU focuses on avoiding or, where impacts cannot be avoided, minimizing to the extent practicable adverse impacts on migratory birds. It strengthens migratory bird conservation through enhanced collaboration between NMFS and USFWS by identifying general responsibilities of both agencies and specific areas of cooperation.

The MoU emphasizes that seabird bycatch reduction should be accomplished at the regional level through the Fishery Management Council process.

The MoU was required by Executive Order 13186 of January 2001 on responsibilities of federal agencies to protect migratory birds. A copy of the MoU is available at www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/national.htm.

Guam's Reef Protection to Benefit Communities

In his first speech before the US Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF), the Honorable Edward B. Calvo, Governor of Guam, stressed the importance of and interconnectedness between coral reefs and the indigenous communities of Guam.

In his remarks, given in Washington, DC, on Feb. 23, 2012, Gov. Calvo said that "we are not just protecting coral, fish and other animals to make us feel good inside, but we are also protecting the traditions, the cultures and lives of the native peoples who have coexisted in harmony with the ocean's incredible resources long before we became a part of America's family."

According to Guam's CRTF point of contact Joseph Artero-Cameron, Gov. Calvo also noted that Guam has met the goals of the Micronesia Challenge if military holdings and other lands and reefs with restricted access, whether due to current national security policies or Environmental Protection Agency advisories, are considered as de facto marine preserve areas. The Micronesia Challenge is a regional inter-governmental initiative in the western Pacific region that strives to conserve 30 percent of near-shore coastal waters and 20 percent of forest land by 2020. The initiative was begun by Palau in late 2005 and includes the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and the US territories of Guam and Northern Mariana Islands.

Gov. Edward Calvo (right) with Joseph Artero-Cameron, Guam's point of contact for the US Coral Reef Task Force.

In related news, on Feb. 17, 2012, Gov. Calvo signed Executive Order 2012–05 (superseding former EO 97–10) to establish a policy development mechanism for the protection of Guam's coral reefs. EO 2012–05 created the Coral Reef Initiative Coordinating Committee (CRICC) and the Coral Reef Initiative Policy Advisory Committee (CRIPAC) to ensure community participation in development of policy and the management and protection of Guam's coral reefs and associated resources.

Council Revisits Mariana Large Vessel Closure

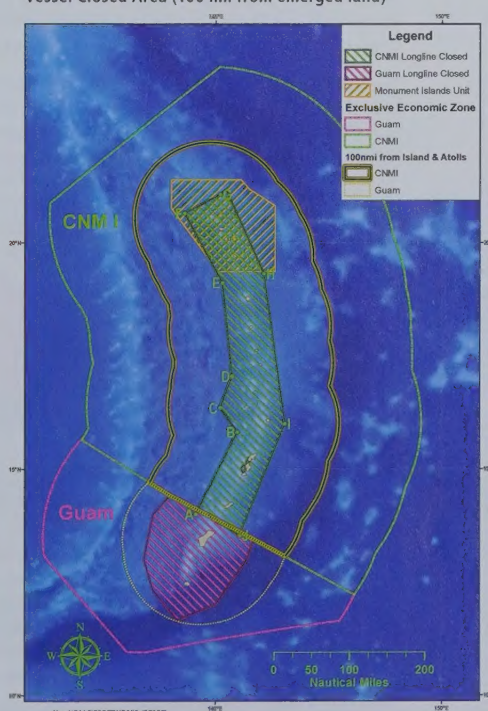
The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council took action at its 154th meeting held June 5 to 9, 2012, in Honolulu, to amend the Pacific Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) to prohibit vessels greater than 120 feet in length from fishing for pelagic species in waters 100-nautical mile (nm) from shore around the Mariana archipelago. The archipelago includes the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam. The primary concern is the potential for local depletion of skipjack and yellowfin tuna due to competition between the small boat fisheries and US purse seine and large longline vessels.

The Secretary of Commerce did not approve a previous Council recommendation for a purse-seine closure for all EEZ waters around CNMI and Guam. A longline exclusion zone is already in place, approved by the Secretary, out to 30 nm from shore around the CNMI and out to 50 to 100 nm from shore (depending on the area) around Guam.

If the recommendation is approved by the Secretary of Commerce, large purse-seine and longline vessels will still be able to fish in the areas of the US EEZ around the Mariana archipelago beyond the boundaries of the proposed large vessel closure, as well as in the US EEZ around the Pacific remote island areas and American Samoa, in foreign EEZ waters under existing fishing agreements and on the high seas.

The proposed closure is not expected to significantly change current fishing intensity or locations. No purse-seine fishing is currently reported within this area, although purse-seine catches beyond the EEZ may be having an influence on Guam yellowfin catches and CNMI skipjack catches. Further, US vessels operating in the US Western Pacific Region are all less than 120 feet in length. The Hawai'i fishery has a vessel size limit of 101 feet. There is no size limit for the American Samoa longline fishery.

CNMI and Guam: Longline Prohibited Areas, Marine National Monument and Proposed Large Pelagic Fishing Vessel Closed Area (100 nm from emerged land)



WCPFC to Consider New Tuna, Marlin, Shark Measures

Landings of sashimi-quality bigeye tuna by the Hawai'i longline fishery have consistently placed Honolulu in the top 10 fishing ports nationwide in terms of landed value. The fate of this important species, which is currently in an overfishing condition in the Pacific, will be determined when the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) holds its 9th Regular Session, Dec. 3 to 7, 2012, in Manila.

In making its decision, the Commission will consider recommendations of its Scientific Committee, which met August 2012 in Busan, Korea. The Committee reviewed recent stock assessments of not only tuna but also striped marlin and sharks.

The WCPFC is comprised of representatives from 25 member countries, including the United States. Seven Territories (including American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam) also participate in the Commission's work. Its jurisdiction is the Western and Central Pacific convention area (WCP-CA). See map at www.wcpfc.int/convention-area-map. Measures adopted by the WCPFC are implemented by the member countries.

Bigeye Tuna

The WCPFC is expected to adopt a new three-year measure for the management of skipjack, yellowfin and bigeye tuna. Finding a balance between the interests of the WCPFC members involved in the longline and purse-seine fisheries will be difficult.

The longline fishery, along with troll and handline fisheries to a lesser degree, targets adult bigeye tuna. The purse-seine fishery incidentally catches juvenile bigeye when fishing on FADs to target skipjack and yellowfin tuna, a practice that began in the 1980s.

The purse-seine fishery has significantly expanded in the WCP-CA over the last 30 years, producing the world's largest tuna fishery. The purse-seine fishery has also provided increased benefits to Pacific Island countries with skipjack and yellowfin resources (see figure 1).

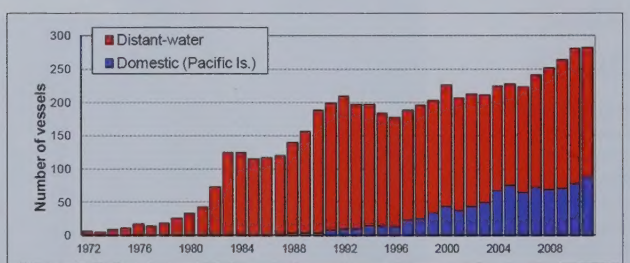


Figure 1: Number of distant-water and domestic (Pacific Islands) purse seine vessels operating in the WCP–CA. Source: Williams and Terawasi 2012; WCPFC-SC8-2012-GN-WP-01

The 2011 stock assessment for bigeye in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean (WCPO) indicates that the purse-seine fishery and the domestic Indonesian and Philippine purse-seine, handline and pole-and-line fisheries have a greater impact to the bigeye stock than the longline fisheries. It concludes that greater overall sustainable yields of bigeye would be obtained if mortality of small fish were reduced. (See figure 2.)

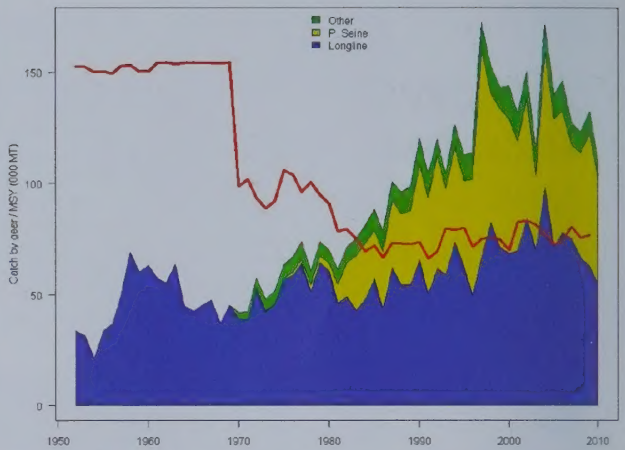


Figure 2: History of the annual bigeye estimates of MSY compared with annual catch split into three sectors. Red line represents MSY. Source: 2011 WCPO Bigeye Tuna Stock Assessment. WCPFC-SC7-2011/SA-WP-02

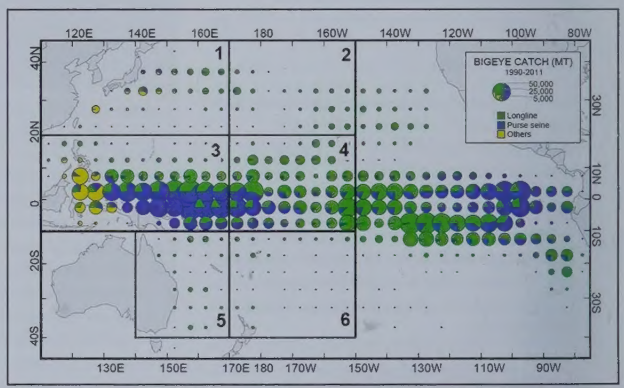


Figure 3: Distribution of bigeye tuna catch, 1990–2011. Source: Williams and Terawasi 2012; WCPFC-SC8-2012-GN-WP-01

Tuna in the WCP-CA are currently managed under an interim measure adopted by the WCPFC at its 8th Regular Session, held in Guam in March 2012. The interim measure was needed as the WCPFC failed to adopt a new three-year measure to replace the expiring 2008-2011 conservation and management measure (CMM 2008-01).

The 2012 interim measure (CMM 2011-01) temporarily extends CMM 2008-01, including national longline bigeye tuna catch limits, July-August fish aggregation device (FAD) closures for purse-seine vessels, and closures to western highs seas pockets to purse-seine fishing. The interim measure also increased China's annual bigeye longline catch limit from 9,314 metric tons (mt) to 11,748 mt, as well as allowed 36 Philippines-flagged purse-seine vessels to fish in the western highs seas pocket.

Under CMM 2008-01, the WCP-CA bigeye quota for the Hawai'i longline fishery is 3,763 mt. This quota has been in place since 2008 and represents 90 percent of the fishery's 2004 landings. Under the US regulations implementing the CMM 2008-01, the Hawai'i fishery is monitored in near-real time and is subject to closure when this quota has been met.

Approximately 90 percent of bigeye fishing mortality in the WCP-CA occurs within 10 degrees north and south of the equator (see figure 3). The Hawai'i longline fishery operates north of this area, where the fishing mortality of bigeye is lower, thus its impact on the stock is minimal.

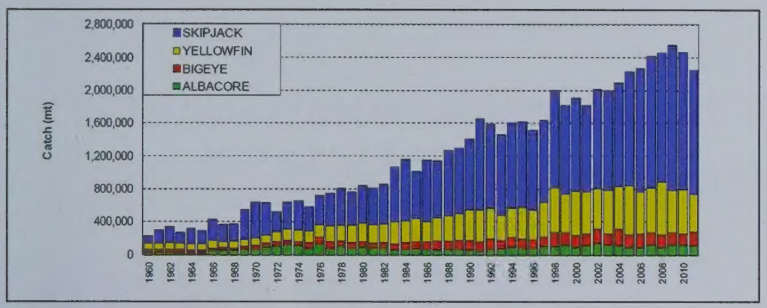


Figure 4. Catch (mt) of albacore, bigeye, skipjack and yellowfin in the WCP–CA. Source: Williams and Terawasi 2012; WCPFC-SC8-2011-GN-WP-01

North Pacific Striped Marlin

Concern about the status of striped marlin in the North Pacific led the WCPFC to develop CMM 2010-01 in 2010. It calls for member countries and cooperating non-members to maintain their striped marlin catches at 80 percent of the maximum catch between 2000 and 2003. The measure covers all fisheries catching striped marlin and not just longline fisheries.

The maximum US catch (i.e., the Hawai'i-based fisheries) of North Pacific striped marlin between 2000 and 2003 amounted to about 534 mt, 80 percent of which is 434 mt. The total North Pacific striped marlin catch by all fisheries in Hawai'i from the WCP-CA and the Eastern Pacific Ocean between 2007 and 2011 ranged from 185 mt to 464 mt, with an average of 329 mt.

The Scientific Committee is now recommending that the WCPFC strengthen the existing CMM to ensure the recovery of North Pacific striped marlin. The Committee noted that the current fishing mortality in the Western and Central North Pacific Ocean (WCNPO) is 24 percent higher than that which would generate maximum sustainable yield (MSY). If the level of fishing mortality were reduced to MSY, this would lead to an estimated spawning biomass increase of roughly 45 percent to 72 percent by 2017. Another management strategy considered by the Committee would limit catches to 2,500 mt or 3,600 mt to increase the spawning biomass.

These potential measures were based on the outcomes of a stock assessment workshop conducted by the Billfish Working Group of the International Scientific Committee (ISC) for Tuna and Tuna-like Species in the North Pacific Ocean (WG), held Dec. 6 to 16, 2011, in Honolulu. This was the group's first assessment of the North Pacific striped marlin stock as separate WCNPO and Eastern North Pacific stocks.

The WG determined that the WCNPO striped marlin stock is overfished, if evaluated relative to MSY-based reference points, using the average estimates during 2008-2010 to measure current status and with the minimum stock size threshold set to be 50 percent of the biomass at MSY. The WG included scientists from Chinese Taipei, Japan, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the United States and was chaired by Jon Brodziak of the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center.

The WG used the most recent fishery data and new life history information on growth, maturity and stock recruitment resilience; reviewed six scientific working papers; and conducted numerous additional analyses to determine a "base case" assessment model. The model results were used to determine trends in population biomass, female spawning biomass and harvest rates during 1975-2010.

Estimates of overall population biomass (all age classes of fish) showed a long-term decline (figure 5). Total population biomass averaged roughly 18,200 mt during 1975-1979 (42 percent of the expected unfished biomass, i.e., the expected biomass in the absence of fishing), and declined to an average of 6,500 mt during 2008-2010 (15 percent of unfished biomass). Reported catches of WCPO striped marlin also declined from an average of 8,100 mt during 1975-1979 to an average of 2,900 mt during 2008-2010.

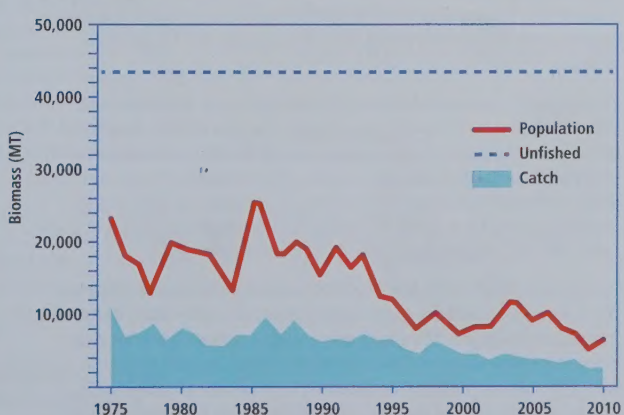


Figure 5. Trends in total biomass and catch of the Western and Central North Pacific striped marlin stock during 1975-2010.

Continued on next page

2011 Tuna Catches Down, Value Up

Tuna caught in the convention area of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCP-CA) accounts for 55 percent of the global tuna catch and 79 percent of the total Pacific Ocean tuna catch.

Globally, tuna catches are at their lowest level this decade. In the WCP-CA, the 2011 provisional catches of tuna are estimated to be 2,244,776 mt, which is the lowest since 2005 and 300,000 mt lower than the record in 2009 (figure 4).

While the catch numbers are down, the value of the WCP-CA tuna catch in 2011 is up. The fisheries reaped US$5.5 billion, an increase of 15 percent from 2010. The purse seine fishery accounted for 56 percent of the total value while the longline fishery accounted for 33 percent.

WCP-CA 2011 Catch Summary

SKIPJACK: 69 percent of tuna catch; 48 percent of total value; 1,540,189 mt; fifth highest recorded; around 215,000 mt less than the record catch of 2009.

YELLOWFIN: 19 percent of the tuna catch; 29 percent of total value; 430,506 mt; lowest since 1996; more than 170,000 mt lower than the record catch taken in 2005 due to poor catches in the purse seine fishery.

BIGEYE: 7 percent of the tuna catch; 17 percent of total value; 151,533 mt; close to the average for the past decade.

ALBACORE: 5 percent of the tuna catch; 7 percent of total value; 122,548 mt (South Pacific component 75,258 mt); close to the average for the past decade.

Tuna, Marlin, Shark Measures

Continued from page 9

The Scientific Committee recommends that the ISC conduct an additional set of projections of the WCNPO striped marlin based on the 2012 stock assessment results using recruitment from the most recent five years. Recruitment during that period is below the average of the 1994-2008 and may represent a different and more pessimistic recruitment regime than assumed in the current projections.

Southwest Pacific Striped Marlin

Concerned about striped marlin in the Southwest Pacific, the WCPFC in 2006 adopted CMM 2006-04, which limited the number of vessels fishing for striped marlin in the WCP-CA south of 15 degrees S to the number in any one year between the period 2000–2004.

After reviewing the last stock assessment for the species, conducted by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Oceanic Fisheries Programme, the Scientific Committee concluded the stock is fully exploited. Recent catches are close to MSY, and recent fishing mortality is slightly below the fishing mortality at MSY. Further, recent spawning biomass is slightly below the spawning biomass at MSY.

The Scientific Committee recommends measures to reduce overall catch of this stock through the expansion of the geographical scope of CMM 2006-04 so as to cover the stock's distribution range. Recognizing that striped marlin is often caught as a non-target species, the Committee also suggests that data analysis be conducted to identify areas of high catch concentration that could be subject to targeted management.

In designing a measure to implement the Committee's recommendations, the WCPFC may need to consider the historic trends in the fishery, including the catch declines in the traditional central and southern areas and the recent catch increases in the northern areas.

Oceanic Whitetip and Silky Sharks

The WCPFC previously agreed to management measures to reduce fishing mortality and rebuild spawning biomass of oceanic whitetip sharks (CMM 2011-04). After reviewing the stock assessment for the species in the WCP-CA, the Scientific Committee determined that the stock is overfished, and overfishing is occurring relative to commonly used reference points. Given the bycatch nature of most of the fishery impacts, mitigation measures provide the best opportunity to improve the status of the stock, the Committee noted.

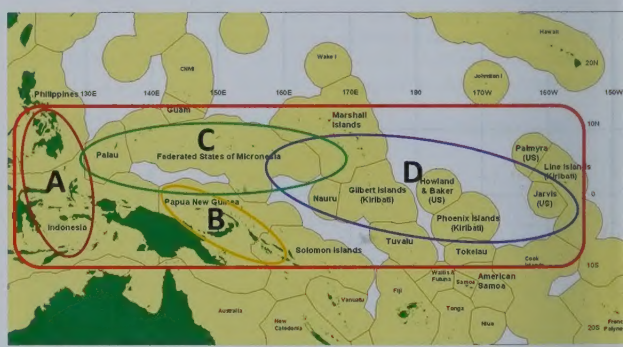
The Scientific Committee also reviewed the stock assessment for silky sharks in the WCP-CA. The Committee was unable to provide management advice for the species based on the stock assessment because it contained a large amount of uncertainty. The Committee is recommending no increase in fishing mortality on silky sharks based on some basic fishery indicators (e.g., mean lengths and some catch per unit series) that show declines in recent years.

Recognizing that the major impacts relate to non-target fisheries, the Science Committee recommends that the Commission consider mitigation measures to reduce the impact of these fisheries as a precautionary measure. The Committee also suggests that the silky shark assessment be updated to incorporate all potentially important data series and that reference points be developed for non-target species, including oceanic white tip and silky sharks.

ISSF Research to Reduce Purse-Seine Bycatch

David Itano, former member of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and a current member of its Scientific and Statistical Committee, has been one of the key researchers engaged in work to reduce the impact of purse-seine catches on bigeye tuna and sharks. The research is being conducted by the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF). ISSF was formed in 2008, by fisheries scientists, the tuna fishing industry and environmental organizations concerned about the future of tuna fisheries and the need for collective action. This global coalition launched publically in March 2009 and has partners and supporters worldwide.

A major focus of the ISSF is reducing bycatch associated with purse-seine fishing around fish aggregating devices (FADs). The main target of the purse-seine vessels are skipjack and yellowfin tuna. Purse-seine fishing on free swimming schools of these species has little associated bycatch. However, catches from beneath FADs and other floating objects (logs, dead whales, marine debris) include juvenile bigeye tuna and a range of other fish species, including sharks.



Purse seine activity of drifting objects in the WCPO: (A) anchored FAD; (B) anchored FAD; (C) drifting FAD and natural objects; and (D) drifting FAD. Source: Research Protocols ISSF Purse Seine Bycatch Mitigation. WCPO Research Cruise Protocols V2: 15 May 2012. http://iss-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/05/ISSF-WCPO1-Research-Cruise-Protocols_21-5-12.pdf

The Council has supported the ISSF research onboard commercial purse-seine vessels. During a recent cruise onboard the purse-seine vessel *CAPE FINISTERRE*, operating in the western Pacific, Itano and a team of researchers examined the behavior of tuna, sharks and other fishes that are attracted to floating objects like FADs; how these species are impacted by fishing; and better ways to estimate target and non-target catches. The team tested ways to release non-target catch from the net and monitored the post-release condition and survival of sharks and other species.

On returning to port in Pago Pago, American Samoa, Itano and Jefferson Murua, a scientist with Spain-based AZTI-Tecnalia, led one of a series of workshops conducted by the ISSF. These workshops are held worldwide as a part of ISSF's efforts to discuss new techniques and uses of technology to reduce the environmental impact of fishing on tuna stocks and the greater marine environment. Since the workshops began in 2010, hundreds of members of the fishing industry have attended sessions. The Pago Pago workshop was a dialogue with purse-seine skippers and crews who have experience fishing around FADs. The session centered on short-term actions that skippers could implement, as well as insight into longer-term research efforts to achieve more sustainable fisheries.

Local and Federal Shark Laws at Odds

Shortfin mako shark comprise about 70 percent of Hawai'i shark landings.

Longline fishing in Hawai'i continues to be increasingly challenged by economic factors. The price of diesel fuel has doubled in recent years, making fuel costs 50 percent of trip costs as opposed to 30 percent in the past. Every commercially landed fish helps offset costs, and legally landed sharks can play their part.

Hawai'i longline vessels operate under federal jurisdiction and are managed by the Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP). Hawai'i longline shark landings must also comply with the Shark Conservation Act of 2010, which requires landed sharks to have their fins attached. Congress did not prohibit the finning of sharks landed legally or the possession of shark fins.

In contrast to the federal laws, the State of Hawai'i passed a law in 2010 that prohibits the possession, sale or distribution of shark fins per se. Since the passage of the Hawai'i law in 2010, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands enacted similar legislation. In American Samoa, the governor passed an executive order in August 2012 prohibiting the possession of sharks and other "rare marine species." NOAA is in the process of developing regulations to implement the requirements of the 2010 Shark Conservation Act, which may address apparent conflicts with state and territorial laws.

The local laws could impact the ability of federally managed longline fisheries from achieving optimum yield through the contribution of shark landings. The inconsistency also has implications for Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act's National Standard 9, which requires Regional Fishery Management Councils to minimize bycatch to the extent practicable.

In Hawai'i, shark meat has a limited market. Most sharks are landed by the Hawai'i-based longline fishery. The Pelagic FEP covers nine shark species: two mako sharks, three thresher sharks, blue shark, oceanic white tip shark, silky shark and salmon shark. The most commercially valuable species in terms of shark flesh are makos and threshers. The most common in Hawai'i are the bigeye thresher and short fin mako. Combined landings of these two species comprise about 90 percent of Hawai'i longline shark landings, which averaged about 360,000 lbs between 2006 and 2010. Makos alone comprise almost 70 percent of landings.

Sharks are clearly not a major component of the Hawai'i longline fishery, comprising 0.1 to 1.0 percent of the total landed volume. Sharks sell for about $0.50/lb at the Honolulu fish auction. The total volume traded in 2009 and 2010 was worth $142,000 and $113,000, respectively. This revenue is equivalent to the fuel bill for a longliner for two or three trips. However, substantial fractions (44 to 60 percent) of the observed catches of both sharks were taken by less than 20 percent of the permitted vessels.

Shortfin mako is the only shark that has been taken in increasing numbers in this fishery in recent years. The large catches have been taken primarily in the northeastern area exploited by this fishery. Bigeye thresher catches have decreased since 2004. The declining trend in the catch per unit effort of thresher sharks in the Hawai'i longline fishery may be symptomatic of both stock condition and operational changes in the fishery.

Hawai'i Fishermen Invited to ACL, MMPA Workshops

Fishermen on the islands of O'ahu, Hawai'i, Maui and Kaua'i are encouraged to attend upcoming workshops on annual catch limits (ACL) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The workshops are free, and parking validation will be provided. The meetings are being organized and hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council.

Fishermen are encouraged to participate and engage in the discussion on how to improve the ACL specification through participation in data collection. Workshop participants will learn about the mechanics of ACL-based management, how ACLs are determined, and what can occur when the limits are reached. Management of fisheries within federal waters under ACLs is a requirement of the 2006 reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

The MMPA discussions will focus on how fishermen can contribute to improving marine mammal stock assessments for whales and dolphins. The MMPA is the federal law enacted in 1972 that protects all marine mammals, including Hawai'i's whales and dolphins. A number of requirements under the MMPA relate to fisheries, yet very little is known to the fishing communities about how this Act may affect them. The Council will provide a fishermen's guide to the MMPA and explain how fishermen can provide input into the process. The workshop will also provide an update on recent Council actions that are of interest to the fishing community.

WORKSHOP LOCATIONS & DATES

Lihue, Kaua'i
Wednesday, Sept. 26, 6-9 pm
Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School Cafeteria
4431 Nuhou St.

Hilo, Hawai'i
Thursday, Sept. 27, 6-9 pm
UH Hilo Kanakaole Hall, Room 122

Kona, Hawai'i
Saturday, Sept. 29, 1:30-4:30 pm
King Kamehameha Hotel
75-5660 Palani Rd.

Kahului, Maui
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 6-9 pm
Maui Waena Intermediate School Cafeteria
795 Onehee Ave.

Honolulu, O'ahu
Wednesday, Oct. 3, 6-9 pm
Kawananakoa Middle School Cafeteria
49 Funchal St.

New Projects to Benefit Non-commercial Fisheries

Strides to improve management of non-commercial fisheries in the Western Pacific Region are being made following three recent events.

Hawai'i Data Collection

The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has agreed to fund two projects to improve the collection of data for Hawai'i's non-commercial fisheries. The first is a pilot project to use the State of Hawai'i's vessel registry as a sampling medium for fishery effort from Hawai'i's non-commercial fisheries. This project is intended to provide Hawai'i with a survey that could exempt it from the National Saltwater Angler Registry. The second project is a review of the current Hawaii Marine Recreational Fishery Survey (HMRFS) survey design and estimation method. This project will look at the specific needs and weaknesses of the HMRFS survey to ensure adequate data collection.

MRIP selected these projects from among the recommendations made in December 2011 by the Hawai'i Non-commercial Fishery Data Collection Workshop. The workshop was hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council with participants from fishermen, the State of Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources, NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) and NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office. One recommended project that was not funded by MRIP was to determine species of concern and target them for specific projects.

Annual Report

The Council has partnered with Hawai'i Pacific University (HPU) to develop a non-commercial fishery section for the Council's annual reports of the Hawai'i, American Samoa and Mariana Archipelago fisheries. Students from HPU worked with PIFSC's Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network and the staff from the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, Guam Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife, and Hawai'i Division of Aquatic Resources to develop the first draft of non-commercial fishery landings of non-pelagic management unit species for each island area. The results of this project were presented to the Council's Plan Teams for their review. Final reports will be made available on the Council's website.

Participants engaging in one of several polling exercises at the Pacific Islands Recreational Fishing Summit. Photo courtesy of Courtney Beavers

Recreational Fishing Summit

The Pacific Islands Recreational (Non-Commercial) Fishing Summit was hosted by NOAA Fisheries in late August 2012 in Honolulu. The meeting objective was to update the Pacific Islands Recreational Fishing Action Agenda and identify potential projects for 2013. The projects will address the five priority goal areas established at the 2010 Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit. They are to improve fishing opportunities, catch and effort data, social and economic data, communication between NOAA Fisheries and fishermen, and NOAA's institutional culture.

Prior to the summit, NOAA Fisheries staff met with the fishermen in each island area to identify issues of concern to non-commercial fishing communities. At the summit, participants prioritized these issues and broke into five round-table groups, one for each of the five national goals. The meeting featured an educational poster session at the start of the meeting and employed digital technology to record participants' views on the proposed projects. Twenty-nine non-commercial fishermen from throughout the Pacific Islands representing shoreline, private boat and charter fishing sectors were invited to attend.

The group developed nearly 20 project ideas ranging from NOAA Fisheries having a greater presence at key fishing events throughout region, to in-depth studies of fishing communities, to giving fishermen a greater voice in marine managed area decisions. The group evaluated the various project ideas based on their feasibility and potential benefit to the community. NOAA Fisheries will fine-tune these ideas into a blueprint of discrete actions, including timelines and potential costs, which will be considered in the final project selection.

Council, NMFS Roles Differ

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council is commonly asked about the relationship between it and NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Basically, the Council develops, monitors and amends the fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs) for commercial and non-commercial fisheries operating in the exclusive economic zone that surround the US Pacific Islands as well as domestic fisheries from these islands operating on the high seas. The Council work is based on the scientific information provided by NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center as well as other sources. After the FEP and/or amendments to them are approved by the Secretary of Commerce, NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO) implements them. One of the duties of PIRO is issuing of fishing permits that may be required for some fisheries under a FEP. PIRO provides monthly updates on the status of these permits.

As of Sept. 1, 2012, PIRO listed 213 permits issued.

Hawai'i longline: 129
American Samoa longline: 47
Western Pacific general longline: 2
Western Pacific receiving vessel: 7
Western Pacific pelagic squid: 0
PRIA troll and handline: 1
Western Pacific lobster (all areas): 0
Western Pacific deepsea shrimp (all areas): 0
Western Pacific bottomfish (other than CNMI): 0
Western Pacific bottomfish CNMI: 11
Main Hawaiian Islands non-commercial bottomfish: 14
Western Pacific precious coral: 2
Coral Reef Ecosystem Special: 0

For about permits, go to the PIRO Sustainable Fisheries Division's website at www.fpir.noaa.gov/SFD/SFD_permits_index.html.

For more on the Council and the FEPs go to www.wpcouncil.org.

Council to Consider New Insular Fisheries ACLs

At its 152nd meeting held Oct. 19 to 22, 2011, in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, specified the first annual catch limits (ACLs) for the insular fisheries in the Western Pacific Region, as required by Congress. The ACLs apply to fish caught in the exclusive economic zone waters (generally, 3 to 200 miles from shore) around Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). For most fisheries, the 2011 specifications cover the years 2012, 2013 and 2014. For other fisheries, the specifications applied to only 2012 due to uncertainty in the data or a pending new stock assessment.

The fishing year for the ACLs coincides with the calendar year for all the fisheries except precious coral, which begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 the following year. Not included in these ACL specifications is the main Hawaiian Island (MHI) Deep 7 bottomfish fishery, which includes six snappers (onaga, ehu, 'opakapaka, kalekale, lehi, gindai) and one grouper (hapu'upu'u). This fishery is managed as an annual catch target (ACT) under the ACL regime, with a fishing year that runs from from September 1 to August 31 of the following year. The 2012-2013 ACT for the MHI Deep 7 is 325,000 lbs.

The National Marine Fisheries Service published the final rule for the 2012 ACLs on Feb. 7, 2012. If any of the 101 ACLs are exceeded, the Council may take actions to reduce the ACL for the next fishing year by the amount of the overage or other appropriate measure.

A further round of ACL specifications for 2013 and beyond will be conducted at the 155th Council meeting to be held Oct. 29 to Nov. 1, 2012, in Honolulu. ACL specifications will be considered for bottomfish, crustaceans and precious coral in American Samoa, Guam and CNMI and non-Deep 7 bottomfish, crustaceans and precious coral in Hawai'i.

A general concern about ACLs in the Western Pacific Region is the overly restrictive limits on them as a result of inadequate data collected for some species through existing surveys.

Funding to expand the data collection systems would improve the data being generated. Enhanced cooperation and participation of the fishing community would also contribute significantly to the improvement of the data and ultimately the information used by fishery managers for decision making. An example of inadequate data is reflected in the low ACLs specified for slipper lobster (30 lbs in American Samoa, 20 lbs in Guam, 60 lbs in CNMI and 280 lbs in Hawai'i). While slipper lobster is not harvested in great numbers, current harvest rates are likely higher than specified and unlikely to be subjecting these stocks to overfishing.

Since October 2011, the Council has received a stock assessment of the US territory bottomfish stocks, which includes overfishing probabilities associated with increasing catch volume. This assessment was reviewed by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee at its 110th meeting in June 2012 and deemed suitable for management purposes. At its 111th meeting, scheduled for Oct. 24 to 26, 2012, in Honolulu, the SSC will deliberate a recommendation for the Council on the adoption of an overfishing probability level and acceptable biological catches (ABCs) on which to base ACLs. Bottomfish stocks in American Samoa, Guam and CNMI are healthy and being fished at fishing mortalities well below those that would generate MSY.

Non-Deep 7 bottomfish caught in the MHI include snappers such as the green jobfish (uku) and yellowtail kali and jacks such as the black jack, ulua and butaguchi. At its 108th meeting in October 2011, the SSC recommended taking an average of three ABC estimates from different methods, resulting in an ABC = 135,000 lbs, which the Council adopted as the ACL form 2012, but a new specification is needed for 2013 and beyond.

For more on the ACL issues to be covered by the Council at its October 2012 meetings, go to www.wpcouncil.org/meeting.

2012 Annual Catch Limits in Pounds for WPR Insular Fisheries in EEZ Waters

FISHERY	FEDERALLY MANAGED SPECIES	AMERICAN SAMOA	CNMI	GUAM	HAWAI'I
Bottomfish	Bottomfish (all managed species)	99,200	182,500	48,200	
	Bottomfish (non-Deep 7 species)	–	–	–	135,000
Crustacean	Deepwater Shrimp	80,000	275,570	48,488	250,773
	Spiny Lobster	2,300	5,500	2,700	10,000
	Slipper Lobster	30	60	20	280
	Kona Crabs	3,200	6,300	1,900	27,600
	Other Crustacean	2,248		5,523	20,686
Precious Coral	Black Coral	1,742	2,100	700	2,500 'Au'au Channel
	Exploratory Area	2,205	1,000	1,000	2,205
	Pink/Bamboo Coral	–	–	–	2,205/551 at Makapu'u Bed 489/123 at 180 Fathom Bank 979/245 at Brooks Bank 148/37 at Ka'ena Point Bed 148/37 at Ke'ahole Bed
Coral Reef Ecosystem	Acanthuridae – surgeonfish	19,516	6,884	70,702	80,545
	Lutjanidae – snapper	18,839	3,905	17,726	65,102
	Mullidae – goatfish	–	3,670	25,367	125,813
	Mollusks	16,694	4,446	21,941	28,765
	Carangidae – jacks	9,490	21,512	45,377	193,423
	Lethrinidae – emperor	7,350	27,466	38,720	–
	Scaridae – parrotfish	8,145	3,784	28,649	33,326
	Serranidae – grouper	5,600	5,519	17,958	–
	Holocentridae – squirrelfish	2,585	–	8,300	41,122
	Mugilidae – mullets	2,857	3,308	15,032	41,112
	Siganidae – rabbitfish	–	2,537	26,120	–
	Kyphosidae – chubs/rudderfish	–	–	13,247	–
	Labridae – wrasse	–	–	5,195	–
	Reef Sharks	1,309	5,600	6,942	111,566
	Bumphead parrotfish	235	797		
	Humphead wrasse	1,743	2,009	1,960	–
	Selar crumenopthalmus (akule)	8,396	7,459	56,514	651,292
	Decapterus macarellus (opelu)	–	–	–	393,563
	Algae	–		5,329	–
	Other coral reef managed species	18,910	9,820	83,214	142,282

NMFS to Revise Overfishing Prevention Guidelines

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) governs fishery management in the United States. Contained within it are 10 National Standards (NS). The first standard (NS1) is "Conservation and management measures shall prevent overfishing while achieving, on a continuing basis, the optimum yield from each fishery for the United States fishing industry."

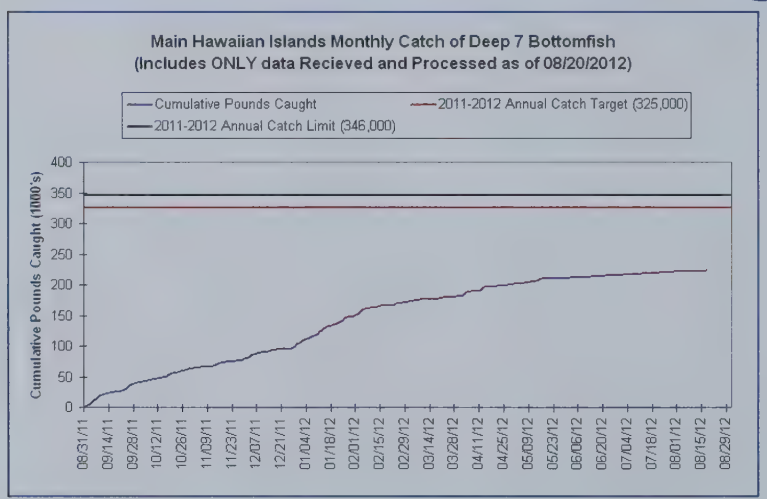
In the 2006, the MSA was reauthorized requiring the use of annual catch limits (ACLs) and accountability measures (AMs) to end overfishing. The subsequent implementation of the ACL and AM requirements by the Regional Fishery Management Councils has revealed the need for the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to refine its guidelines on how the Councils are to comply with NS1 when developing and amending their fishery management and/or ecosystem plans.

NMFS released an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR) on May 3, 2012, on potential revision to the NS1 guidelines. The initial cutoff date for responding to the ANPR was Aug. 1, 2012. This was subsequently revised to Sept. 15, 2012, at the request of the nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils in order that they might have enough time to consider these issues and provide comments on them.

Issues regarding the application of the NS1 guidelines include stocks in a fishery, overfishing and multi-year impacts, ACLs and optimum yield, mixed-stock fisheries and optimum yield, scientific uncertainty and management uncertainty, data poor stocks, acceptable biological catch control rules, catch accounting, AMs, ACL exceptions, rebuilding progress and revising rebuilding plans.

The Western Pacific Council has had to grapple with many of the issues, especially "stocks in a fishery" and "data poor stocks." There are no stock assessments for the majority of the federally managed stocks in the Western Pacific Region, and most ACLs are expressed as the 75th percentile of the catch history. This stems from the great diversity of near-shore coral reef fish species, which are now the focus of attention by NMFS for life history information. The Council has also been looking at the potential to use reef fish biomass data collected by NMFS to generate ACLs from simple production models.

2012-13 Hawai'i Bottomfish Season Opens



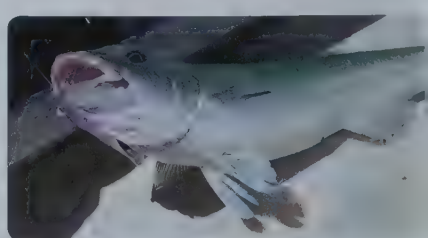
Sept. 1, 2012, started the new main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) bottomfishing year with the Annual Catch Target (ACT) for seven deepwater species (Deep 7) again set at 325,000 pounds. This past fishing year was the first time the bottomfish fishery did not close since the quota-based management regime started in 2007. The bottomfish landings at the end of the 2011-12 fishing year, which ended on Aug. 31, 2012, represented about 70 percent (225,000 pounds) of the allocated ACT of 325,000 pounds.

In prior years, the MHI Bottomfish fishery reached its annual quota before the fishing year ended, which resulted in the closure of the fishery during the summer months.

Concern was raised by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council regarding the shift in targeting and landing of uku (grey snapper, a non-Deep 7 bottomfish) during that time. The Council has asked the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center to conduct a stock assessment on uku as a result. The Council is looking forward for the uku stock assessment to be completed.

The NMFS and Council have also been working to update the essential fish habitat (EFH) and habitat areas of particular concern (HAPC) designations for bottomfish as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The Council took final action on the Hawai'i bottomfish EFH and HAPC designations based on the NMFS review and subsequent independent scientific panel recommendations. In summary, the EFH designation for Hawai'i bottomfish will remain unchanged as 0-400 meters. However, new HAPC designations are being proposed for seven areas in the MHI, including Ka'ena Point, Makapu'u and Kane'ohe Bay off O'ahu; Penguin Bank off south Moloka'i; Pailolo Channel off Maui; North Kaho'olawe; and waters off of Hilo on the Big Island.

The MSA defines EFH as "those waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity." The MSA requires federal agencies that authorize, fund or undertake actions that may adversely affect EFH to consult with NMFS. The agency must provide conservation recommendations to federal and state agencies regarding actions that would adversely affect EFH.



Uku (grey snapper) has been a target species when the Hawaii Deep 7 bottomfish quota has been reached before the fishing year ends, raising concerns that a stock assessment for the species is needed.

The Fishermen Code of Conduct signage at He'eia Kea, Kaunakakai and Mo'omomi was a team effort. Pictured at He'eia Kea are (far left and far right) Rocky and Jerry Kaluhiwa of Moku O Kakuhihewa (O'ahu); Sylvia Spalding, communications officer for the Council (red shirt); Meghan Statts, DOBOR O'ahu District manager (grey shirt); and Ernie Choy, harbormaster (left) and his assistant.

Fishermen Code of Conduct Signs Installed at Hawai'i Harbors

In February 2012, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR) partnered to promote responsible behavior among Hawai'i's fishermen. The two organizations agreed to install signs at He'eia-Kea and Kaunakakai Small Boat Harbors that highlight a fishermen's code of conduct. The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program provided partial funds for the project.

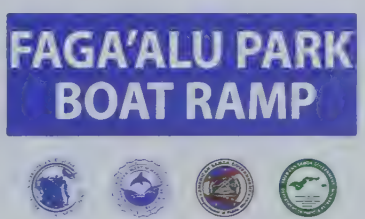
The elements in the code were taken from discussions during the Ho'ohanohano I Na Kupuna (Honor Our Ancestors) Puwalu conference series in 2006-2007, which included hundreds of traditional practitioners, fishermen and others. The code was subsequently discussed and vetted at a Fishermen's Forum, held in October 2011. To date, three signs have been installed at He'eia-Kea on O'ahu and two at Kaunakakai and one at Mo'omomi on Moloka'i. Waterproof, lightproof and tear-proof posters have also been printed for distribution to harbormasters.

Code of conduct is one of the five pillars of Hawai'i's Aha Moku system of traditional natural resource management, as identified by the Aha Kiole Advisory Committee in its 2011 report to the Hawai'i State Legislature. The code of conduct is an informal social control that reinforces the important Hawaiian cultural value of *kuleana*, or responsibility. The other key elements of the Aha Moku system that were identified include adaptive management, community consultation, education, and eligibility criteria to participate in natural resource management.

Fishery Development Projects Advance in American Samoa

Projects to help develop American Samoa fisheries are making headway. These projects are funded by the Sustainable Fisheries Fund administered by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. They are coordinated by Ueta Fa'asili, the Council's American Samoa fisheries development coordinator.

On the island of Tutuila, boat ramps have been constructed at Faga'alu Park and at Lyon's Park in Tafuna. Both ramps are located on government owned lands administered by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The construction of these ramps was initiated after the two pre-existing public boat ramps on Tutuila



(at Pago Pago and Fagasa) suffered damage from the Sept. 29, 2009, tsunami. They remain inaccessible. The Federal Emergency Management Agency is providing funding to American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR) to restore them. However, their locations are not

Continued on next page

American Samoa Swordfish Fishing Gets Thumbs-Up

The use of shallow-set longline to target swordfish in the US exclusive economic zöne and on the high seas surrounding American Samoa has been given a thumbs-up by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. The Council took final action to amend the Pelagic Fishery Ecosystem Plan to permit the fishery during its 153rd meeting, held March 5 to 9, 2012, on Guam and Saipan. The amendment would require operators in the fishery to employ the same sea turtle mitigation measures as required in the Hawai'i shallow-set fishery, including carrying an observer when required by the National Marine Fisheries Service to document interactions with seabirds and turtles. However, the American Samoa fishery would not be subject to the loggerhead and leatherback turtle interaction limits as the Hawai'i fishery.

The amendment will be transmitted to the Secretary of Commerce for final approval. The amendment will also include a requirement that longline vessels use two seabird mitigation measures when operating south of 30 degrees South. This requirement would implement Conservation and Management Measure 2007-04 of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). The WCPFC is an international fishery management organization to which the United States is a party (see pages 8-10).

Fishery Development Projects Advance in American Samoa

Continued from page 15

500-gallon, transportable fuel tanks at DMWR office, Tutuila, awaiting shipment to Manu'a.

well suited for fishermen who trailer their boats. Getting to the Pago Pago ramp involves driving through Tutuila's most traffic congested areas. The Fagasa boat ramp is on the north side of Tutuila, which involves driving over steep hills from central Tutuila.

On the Manu'a islands of Ofu and Ta'u, storage fales have been completed that will be used to securely house new fuel tanks and ice machines to support local boat-based fisheries. The islands currently lack such amenities, thus the small-vessel fleet is restricted in its range and ability to participate in bottomfish and pelagic fisheries. The shelters are located 200 yards from the Ofu and Ta'u harbors and are equipped with electricity and water.

Four 500-gallon tanks will be located at the facilities. The tanks will be secured to trailers and transported to Tutuila on the weekly inter-island ferry for refueling. A custom fuel tank manufacturing company based in Connecticut has built and shipped the fuel tanks to Tutuila, where they are being stored outside the DMWR office. The tanks are built in accordance with US Environmental Protection Agency requirements and National Fire Protection Association and American Petroleum Institute standards for fuel storage. Authorizations have been provided by the local American Samoa government Project Notification Review System board including approval of a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan required by the Environmental Protection Agency. The tanks will be delivered to the Manu'a Islands now that the storage shelters are complete.

Shelter for ice making and fuel storage at the Faleluaanuu Fishermen's Cooperative facility on Ofu Island, Manu'a.

The lack of ice has been consistent limiting factor in providing fish products from the Manu'a islands to markets in Tutuila. The ice making machines to be located in Ofu and Ta'u will support several *alia* vessels. The Council, in coordination with DMWR, selected an American Samoa company to provide the delivery, installation and maintenance of 5,000-lb ice makers on Ofu and Ta'u as well as refrigerated storage containers. The ice makers and storage containers have been shipped to Ofu and Ta'u and are currently awaiting hook-up to the facilities' electrical and water systems. DMWR is entering into a maintenance contract with a local service provider.

The Council will be working with DMWR to contract facility managers for a year. After this period, fishermen cooperatives on the Manu'a islands will take over management responsibility of the facilities including fuel storage and ice making. Articles of Incorporation (AOI) for the Tai Samosama (Ta'u) and Faleluaanuu (Ofu) Fishermen's Cooperatives were signed at the DMWR office in Tutuila on Nov. 17, 2011. In January 2012, the American Samoa Attorney General's office approved both AOIs. The cooperative are now in the process of developing their bylaws. Initial membership interest for the Tai Samosama and Faleluaanuu Coop-eratives is expected to be 25 and 20, respectively. Members of either cooperative have to be fishermen.

Expanded Sanctuary Constrains American Samoa Fisheries

The final rule expanding the 0.25-square-mile Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary (FBNMS), located of the southwest coast of Tutuila island, into the 13,508 square mile National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa (NMSA) was published in the Federal Register on July 26, 2012. The expansion was triggered in part by Presidential Proclamation 8337 issued by President George W. Bush in 2009, which initiated the addition of the marine areas of the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument to the FBNMS. The new NMSA now includes six units: Fagatele, Rose Atoll (called Muliava in Samoan), Faluaa/Fogama'a (an area on the southwest corner of Tutuila Island), part of the waters around Aunu'u Island, part of the waters around Ta'u Island and most of the waters around Swains Island.

The implementation of these new sanctuary units carries with it certain constraints on fishing. The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council has drafted fishing regulations for Rose Atoll, which are under review by the National Marine Fisheries Service. There are no site specific fishing regulation for Ta'u, Fagalua/Fogama'a and Swains Island, other than those specified by the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources (DMWR). The Aunu'u island unit of the Sanctuary is divided into Zones A and B. Fishing, other than trolling for pelagic species, is banned in Zone B, which is designated as a Research Zone.

Aunu'u is home to about 500 people, who rely on the surrounding reef area for fish. The reefs and deep slope habitat are also popular with fishermen from Tutuila. The rationale for banning all but pelagic fishing in Zone B is to provide a control area as a mechanism for research activities that will increase the opportunity to discriminate scientifically between natural and human-induced change to species populations and habitat condition. This includes controlling impacts from fishing, pollutants, anchoring and other benthic disturbances.

From the Council's perspective it is difficult to see how the over-layering of the new sanctuaries is consistent with President Obama's Executive Order 13604 to improve performance of federal permitting and review on infra-structure projects. One of the stated objectives of EO 13604 is to address situations where multiple agencies, both local and federal, have jurisdictional responsibility for the same resources.

Additionally, the establishment of the Zone B research area has not been accompanied by a research plan that would address the objectives as outlined above or the identification of the agency or institution that would conduct this research. Further, no clear management need has been identified to require the establishment of the Zone B research area, nor is a cost-benefit analysis provided to support depriving indigenous people the rights they have enjoyed for three millennia to fish on the reef areas near their communities. The American Samoa DMWR has been conducting these types of investigations for many years at different sites around American Samoa. Further, the rationale for the additional protection and expansion of the monument appears not to consider the successes

Advisory Council for Marianas Marine Monument Holds First Meeting

The inaugural meeting of the Marianas Trench Monument Advisory Council (MTMAC) was held at the Fiesta Resort Hotel in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), on June 5 and 6, 2012. The MTMAC provides advice and recommendations on the development of management plans and management of the Mariana Trench Marine National Monument. The monument was established by executive order on Jan. 6, 2009, by President George W. Bush citing the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906. The MTMAC consists of three officials of the CNMI government and one representative each from the Department of Defense and the US Coast Guard.

The meeting was attended by MTMAC members Arnold Palacios, Benigno Sablan, the Governor's Special Assistant Dr. John Joyner, Morgan Roper from the US Coast Guard and Roy Tsutsui from the Department of Defense. Susan White and Barry Stjeglitz from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Lisa Croft and Heidi Hirsh from NOAA Pacific Island Regional Office also attended the meeting, as well as a handful of individuals from government and the private sector.

In his welcoming remarks, Gov. Benigno Fitial shared his expectations stemming from discussions held in December 2008 with the Bush Administration.

He said the Volcanic and Trench Units of the monument should be limited to the sea floor feature and open access should be maintained for fishing and unrestricted travel. The US federal government should convey, without restrictions to the CNMI the near-shore submerged lands from 0 to 3 miles for all islands in the CNMI. The US Departments of Commerce and the Interior (DOC and DOI) should undertake an assessment of the opportunities for education, research and other economic activities associated with the new monument. The DOI should honor its part of the agreement by developing legislation, including provisions for revenue-sharing, authorizing mineral exploration and extraction, and setting up the regulatory process for such activities to name a few.

The Marianas Trench Monument Advisory Council (MTMAC) held its inaugural meeting in June 2012. Pictured are (l-r) Dr. John Joyner, Arnold Palacios, Susan White, Heidi Hirsh, Ben Sablan, Roy Tsutsui, Lisa Croft, Barry Stjeglitz and Morgan Roper.

During the meeting, the MTMAC members elected Ben Sablan as their chair, John Joyner as vice chair and Roy Tsutsui as secretary/treasurer. They also drafted bylaws and came up with recommendations for either the agencies and/or MTMAC members to provide for their next meeting. The next meeting would include DOI representatives to look into revenue sharing for minerals mined within the MTMAC; DOI/DOC to find out if the mineral exclusion areas have been identified and, if not, the legal and technical options; NOAA to provide an update on the development of subsistence fishing regulations within the island unit and identify overlap to adequately address it; and a discussion on the meaning of co-management. Local MTMAC members will discuss with Gov. Fitial about his contacting Gov. Calvo in Guam regarding Guam's potential interest in joining the MTMAC.

The MTMAC convened again via teleconference on Sept. 4, 2012, to tackle the draft bylaws, funding opportunities, identifying and tracking all research and monitoring activities in the monument, exploring opportunities for educational and scientific workshops in the Marianas, reviewing preliminary goals for the monument, organizing interagency meeting or task force to review and provide solutions and status on the visitors center, and the use of local entities to support and organize meetings or conferences.

Continued from page 16

of American Samoa DMWR in regulating fishing in American Samoa, where fish stocks are healthy and reef fish catches form only a small fraction of the fishable biomass.

The NMFS PIFSC released an updated assessment of the American Samoa bottomfish fishery in May 2012, which indicated the fishery remains healthy. For background on the status of American Samoa reef stocks, see *Pacific Islands Fishery Monographs 3: American Samoa Archipelagic Fishery Ecosystem Report* at www.wpcouncil.org/library/docs/Monographs-3_AmSamoa_Apr2011_web.pdf.

The Council questions the rationale for a sanctuary research zone that bans traditional fishing, except for pelagic species, in waters surrounding Aunu'u island, given that the fish stocks are healthy and fish catches form only a small fraction of the fishable biomass in American Samoa.

CNMI, Guam Teachers Learn to Monitor Local Watersheds

Saipan (left) and Guam (right) educators with the water monitoring kits they earned, courtesy of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, for participating in the Teachers Workshop on Watershed Monitoring.

Thirty-three teachers from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Guam joined Dr. Lucas Moxey of the NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center's Ocean Watch Program for two hands-on workshops on monitoring watersheds organized and hosted by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. During each of the two full-day workshops, teachers learned about the geology of their island and techniques to sample, analyze and monitor the quality of fresh and near-shore waters. The Council showed the teachers how the data collected could be stored online in the data forms available at www.

Guam teachers analyze the water samples they collected from the shore near the University of Guam's Marine Lab.

fishbox.org. The Council also provided each participating educator with an estuary and marine monitoring kit and each school represented at the workshops with a pH and connectivity tester, so the educators could pass the lessons they learned to their students. The Council encourages school- and community-based watershed monitoring to enhance the information available to manage fisheries using an ecosystem-based approach.

The CNMI workshop was held March 3, 2012, at the Fiesta Hotel, Garapan, and included boat trips courtesy of the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife, which allowed the teachers to monitor offshore waters. The Guam workshop was held March 10, 2012, at the University of Guam (UOG) Marine Lab, Mangilao, Guam, and included an opportunity for teachers to earn a UOG course credit. To earn the credit, the teachers worked with UOG Sea Grant faculty member Dr. Laura Biggs to implement lesson plans in their classroom based on the materials covered during the workshop.

Si Yu'os ma'åse' and Olomwaay to the participants and to the CNMI Public School System, which helped organize the teachers on Saipan. The Saipan educators included Lizana Henry, Vincent Dela Cruz, Thomas N. Masayos and Michael Vilbgomez from Chacha Oceanview Junior High School; Jennifer Douglass from Grace Christian Academy; Shawna Chong, Thelma Cing, Penelope Norita, Tricia Santos and Turiana Welch from Kagman Elementary School; Tricia Del Rosario, Ellen Rayphand and Ignacia Torres from Koblerville Elementary School; Alan Lebria from Marianas Water Works; and Joe Limes, chairman of the Youth Advance Council. The Guam educators were Heidi Frieders of John F. Kennedy High School; Cecilio Gonzales, Gina Gonzales, Joaline Smith, Jean Tuquero, Rose Cabill and Marybelle Iglesias from McCool Elementary School; Susan Hieter from St. John's School; Luwaina Martinez-Diaz from Upi Elementary School; , Sabina Perez and Jay Anitok from Simon Sanchez High School; Tholeathcus Raiford from JP Torres Alternative School; Joaline Smith from Ordot Chalan Pago Elementary School; Linda Tatreau from George Washington High School; Winnie Taijito from Talofofo Elementary School; Florence Camacho from Luis P. Untalan Middle School; Pat Wolff from Inafa Maolek Mediation Center; and Marybelle Quinata from NOAA habitat.

The Council and Moxey are working with the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Service to plan a similar workshop on Tutuila on March 9, 2013. For more information on this workshop, contact Fini Aotaoto at fini@lava.net or Sylvia Spalding at sylvias@lava.net.

Teachers at the Saipan workshop sampled offshore waters, with the help of the CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Regional Councils
Promote Nation's Fisheries in DC

In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly designated June 8 as "World Oceans Day." During the week surrounding that day, two annual Washington, DC, events provide the Regional Fishery Management Councils an opportunity to promote sustainable domestic fisheries at the nation's capitol. This year was no exception.

On display during Capitol Hill Ocean Week, this traditional outrigger canoe from Guam fabricated with fiberglass illustrated how ancient traditions can meld with modern technology to meet today's needs. The display was a joint effort by the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Matson, Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI) and the University of Guam's Sea Grant Program.

The first event was Capitol Hill Ocean Week (CHOW) held June 5 to 8, 2012. CHOW provides a forum where ocean science and management experts, stakeholders and policy makers examine key issues affecting the health of our oceans and marine resources. This year's theme, *One Nation, Shaped by the Sea*, explored America's relationship with the ocean and how it can help chart an economically and environmentally sustainable course for our nation's future.

The 37th annual NOAA Fish Fry in Washington, DC, provided the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council with an opportunity to promote US Pacific island fisheries and cuisine. Pictured at the Council's booth are (l-r) Council Executive Director Kitty Simonds, Assistant Chef James Alwin, Secretary of Commerce John Bryson, Chef de Cuisine Jon Matsubara (Royal Hawaiian Resort's Azure Restaurant) and NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco.

During the event, the Western Pacific, Mid-Atlantic and Caribbean Councils set up a joint informational booth, where staff members Sylvia Spalding, Mary Clark and Diana Martino answered questions and provided publications about the regional fisheries and the nation's fishery management process.

Additionally, the Western Pacific Council displayed a Chamorro *proa* (traditional sailing canoe) during the annual Leadership Awards Dinner, a regular part of the CHOW week, sponsored by the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation. The *proa* illustrated not only the long intimate relationship that Pacific Islanders have had with the ocean but also how ancient traditions can meld with modern technology to meet today's needs. The proa on display was a project of the University of Guam's Sea Grant Program, which combines the ancient proa design and modern fiberglass techniques to fabricate economical canoes for communities interested in revitalizing Guam's sailing and fishing traditions. The *proa* was set up and staffed by Frank Cruz, president of Guam's Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI), with help from Ui and Ke'eaumoku Kapu from Moku O Kahekili (Maui). Assisting the Council in bringing the proa from Guam to DC was Senior Vice President Vic Angoco, Pacific Division, Maston Navigation Company.

The second event was the 37th annual NOAA Fish Fry, held June 6 at the Department of Commerce. The Western Pacific Council's booth featured Jon Matsubara, chef de cuisine of the Royal Hawaiian Resort's Azure Restaurant, and his assistant James Alwin. The chefs prepared two dishes for the hundreds in attendance: Black Magic Ahi with Ruby Port and Hot Mustard Sauce and Smoked Opah Tartare with Watercress Salad and Breadfruit and Taro Chips. The fish was donated by the Hawaii Longline Association. Special guests included US Secretary of Commerce John Bryson, NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco and Senator Daniel K. Akaka and his wife, Millie.

First Stewards Call for Action on *Climate Change*

Above left: Panel leads (behind) and witnesses (seated) for each region included Ciro Lo Pinto and Ted Herrera (Great Lakes-East Coast-Gulf of Mexico), Mike Williams and Nelson Kanuk (Alaska), Ed Johnstone (co-lead with Micah McCarty) and Clarita Begay (West Coast), and Kitty Simonds and Kalei Nu'uhiwa (Pacific Islands). Middle: The Kaluhiwa 'ohana demonstrate poi pounding. Right: Lino Olopai and the Palúw Dancers of Saipan perform a traditional Refaluwasch chant.

Climate change is occurring rapidly, creating an urgent need for the world to make use of indigenous ways of adapting and maintaining the resiliency that has served ancient coastal and island cultures for thousands of years. That was the message delivered at the inaugural First Stewards Symposium held July 17 to 20, 2012, at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), Washington, DC. The event brought together more than three hundred native leaders and cultural experts, climate scientists, policy-makers and non-government organization, including a large contingent from the US Pacific Islands.

The Symposium was co-hosted by the NMAI and the Hoh, Makah and Quileute Tribes and the Quinault Indian Nation tribes located in Washington state. It included four panels from the West Coast, Alaska, US Pacific Islands and joint Great Lakes-East Coast-Gulf of Mexico regions, as well as a Looking Forward panel.

The Symposium concluded with consensus support of a Resolution drafted by the panel leads, calling on the US government to formally recognize the First Stewards and to consult with their tribal governments and indigenous communities for guidance in all policies that affect their way of life. The resolution also called for the government to support the management efforts of the indigenous communities. The Resolution noted that such actions by the government would strengthen America's resiliency and ability to adapt to climate change. The Resolution is being sent to President Obama, Congress and relevant federal agencies. First Stewards has become incorporated as a 501c3 non-profit organization to further the actions of the Symposium.

"Preparing for winter is an age-old principle," said Micah McCarty, the West Coast Panel lead and the chair of the First Stewards Symposium and the Makah tribe. "What we must prepare for now is staggering, but we must design regional and national pathways to create ways of working together to adapt to and reduce the speed of these changes. We can make a little more time to create these new strategies."

COASTAL PEOPLES ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE
FIRST STEWARDS

"On our small islands in the Pacific, we indigenous Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro and Refaluwasch have survived for millennia by adhering to our ancestors' wisdom of fashioning tools, thatching roofs and conserving resources in preparation of anticipated weather," said Kitty Simonds, the Pacific Islands Panel lead and Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council executive director. "The First Stewards of the Pacific Islands and the coastal and inland nations and tribes of North America have resolved to use our generational knowledge and the support of our youth, elders, friends and scientists to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change, which are already evident in our oceans, glaciers, ice packs, estuaries, waterways and coastlines."

Left: Pacific Islands Panel included (l-r) panel lead Kitty Simonds, moderator Sen. Brickwood Galuteria, Gov. Ben Fitial (CNMI), Joseph Artero-Cameron (Guam), Ray Tualfono (American Samoa), Timothy Bailey (Hawai'i) and Pene Lefale (New Zealand).

Below: A member of the Hawai'i halau demonstrates ti craft to a captivated group.

Above: Winners of the Council's 2011 high school photo-essay contest on climate change and traditional knowledge showcased their work and gave a group presentation. Pictured (l-r) Roice Gariando (Hawai'i), Tatiana Joy Calvo (CNMI), Anthony Tornito (Guam) and Farrah Tulia (American Samoa).

The Pacific Island panelists included The Honorable Benigno Fitial, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); Ufagafa Ray Tulafono, director of the American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources; Joseph Artero-Cameron, president of the Guam Department of Chamorro Affairs (Dipattamenton I Kaohao Guinåhan Chamorro); Paulokaleioku Timothy Bailey, Haleakala National Park, Maui; and Pualele Penehuro "Pene" Lefale, manager of the International Affairs Office with the Meteorological Service of New Zealand Ltd. The panel was moderated by Hawai'i State Senator Brickwood Galuteria and began with a special 11-minute video *Little Changes Have Big Impacts on Little Islands*, produced for the occasion.

Other Pacific island participants included Office of Hawaiian Affairs Trustee Peter Apo and Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association President Manuel Duenas, who helped McCarty moderate the overall symposium. Kawaikapuokalani "Frank" K. Hewett and his halau from Hawai'i, the Palúw dancers from Saipan (CNMI) and Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI) from Guam were among the group of Pacific Island cultural practitioners who made the symposium unlike any other climate change conference. They provided not only performances but also taught children and adults the traditional crafts that have helped indigenous cultures adapt and survive for millennia. The Guam Museum, Kaluhiwa 'ohana, Carolinian Affairs Office, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, United Fishing Agency and others provided exhibits and assisted with the recipes and fish for the Pacific Island cuisine that was featured during the reception and at the NMAI café during the week of the Symposium.

Also showcased at the symposium were the high school students who won the Council's 2011 photo-essay contest on climate change and traditional knowledge: Roice Gariando of Ke Ana La'ahana Public Charter School, Hawai'i; Farrah Tulia of Nu'uuli Vocational Technical High School, American Samoa; Tatiana Joy Calvo of Southern High School, CNMI; and Anthony Tornito, Okkodo High School, Guam. The winning middle school posters from the Council's 2011 contest on the same theme were also displayed, and a group of students from the University of Hawai'i also participated, with support from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Pacific Islands Regional Office.

Clarita Begay from Washington state; Ted Herrera from the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation, Texas; Nelson Kanuk from Kipnuk, Alaska; and Kalei Nu'uhiwa from Hawai'i were selected to formally witness the entire symposium. Their observations were reported on the final day of the Symposium and will form the basis of the Symposium proceedings.

For more information, videos of the daily presentations, a copy of the Resolution and a list of the many partners and sponsors who made the Symposium possible, visit www.firststewards.org.

CCC Recommends Involving Councils in ESA Consultations

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation process should involve the Regional Fishery Management Councils. That was one of the recommendations that came out of this year's Council Coordination Committee (CCC) meeting, an annual event that brings together the chairs and executive directors from the eight regional Councils and leadership from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The 2012 CCC was hosted by the Western Pacific Council on May 1 to 3, on the Big Island.

The agenda focused on the need for stock assessments, addressing bycatch, application of marine protected areas, international fisheries management and the increasing marginalization of the Councils by other statutes.

One of the highlights was a panel discussion on the issue of jeopardy in ESA biological opinions. A key outcome from the panel was the CCC recommendation to form a working group consisting of the Councils, NMFS and the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee to make recommendations on a policy to integrate the Councils in the ESA consultation process.

Other CCC recommendations addressed coastal and marine spatial planning, improving support for stock assessments, convening of the National Scientific and Statistical Committee Working Group and carrying out prior recommendations, five-year research priorities of the Councils, improving communications and outreach, hosting of the Managing Our Nations Fisheries 3 conference in May 2013 at the nation's capitol, electronic monitoring and addressing National Standard 1. To obtain a copy of the meeting minutes, go to http://www.fisherycouncils.org/CCC/may2012/CCCminutes412.pdf.

The 2012 Council Coordination Committee meeting was held May 1 to 3 in Hawai'i. The annual meeting brings together the chairs and executive directors from the eight regional Councils and leadership from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

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1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400
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www.wpcouncil.org

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Telephone: (808) 522-8220
Fax: (808) 522-8226
info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov

INTERIM CHAIR
William Aila

VICE CHAIRS
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William Sword - American Samoa
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Kitty M. Simonds

In Memoriam

Senator Wadsworth Yee

Wadsworth Yee passed away on May 8, 2012, at the age of 90. Yee had chaired the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council from October 1976 to August 1987. As its first chair, Wads led the Council into uncharted waters and yet he was able to guide other members into completing and carrying out the first fishery management plans for the Western Pacific Region.

Wadsworth Yee (center, seated) and other original members of the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. As the Council's first chair, holding the office from 1976 to 1987, Yee set the course for sound stewardship of fisheries in the US Pacific Islands that continues today.

His training in law, years in business and experience in the Legislature all contributed to his success in bringing people of varying positions to the same table, and, if not always reaching agreement, at least having a better understanding of each other's priorities. He had friends on both sides of the aisle and in all corners of public opinion and was interested in their views, even when he might not share them.

As a result of these efforts, four of the Council's five fishery management plans were implemented under Wads' watch. Most foreign fishing was banned from economic zones in our region. Drift gill netting, trawling and bottom-set long-lining were also banned in our region. Conservation efforts such as fish limits, observers, limited entry and fishery management zones advanced to protect precious corals, Hawaiian monk seals, turtles, other marine mammals and bottomfish in the Hawaiian archipelago. Fishery development was promoted, including the fostering of an emerging crustaceans fishery in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and commitments to research that have led to the flourishing today of Hawai'i's pelagic fisheries and the consistent ranking of Honolulu as one of the top 10 US fishing ports in value landed. National policy was changed to include tuna under the jurisdiction of the fishery council, closing a giant special interest loophole in the original law.

The consensus-building talents Wads had exercised in Hawai`i worked well on a national scale. After leaving the Council, he worked with US Rep. Patricia Saiki, US Sen. Daniel Inouye and other members of Congress (notably North Carolina's Walter Jones and Alaska's Ted Stevens) in outmaneuvering the powerful tuna interests to include tuna under the Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Each new federal administration has presented its own challenges, but Wads' early leadership style has enabled the Council to continue its priorities under his successors and to work for the interests of all concerned with the future of the Western Pacific in both the domestic and international arenas. Those of us inspired and enabled by Wads have done our best to follow his example in the noble mission of shared ocean management that began in law 35 years ago but which our island ancestors pursued in spirit for centuries. Wads' leadership in that first Fishery Council decade has become a guiding star, one that inspires us and honors our forebears in the Pacific.

Council Family Updates

At its 154th meeting on June 2012 in Honolulu, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council bid a fond farewell to three members who had each served on the Council for the maximum allowable term of nine consecutive years.

Manuel Duenas

Manuel Duenas, president of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, in which capacity he has served from 1995 to the present. Prior to becoming a Council member, Duenas served on numerous Council advisory panels. As a Council member he served as a vice chair for most of his tenure and then in his final year as the chair of not only the Council but also of the 2012 Council Coordinating Committee, an annual meeting of all eight of the nation's Regional Fishery Management Councils.

Lauvao Stephen Haleck

Lauvao Stephen Haleck, a high talking chief, a renowned preacher, singer and former police officer in American Samoa. He has served on the Council as chair and vie chair. He also represented American Samoa as part of the Territory Delegation to the Western and Central Pacific Fishery Commission.

Sean Martin

Sean Martin, a pioneer in the modern Hawai'i longline fishery, co-owner of several longline vessels and a Honolulu fishing supply business and president of the Hawaii Longline Association. He served on the Council as chair and vice chair. He was also appointed as a US Commissioner for the Western and Central Pacific Commission and will continue to serve in this capacity.

New Hawai'i and Guam members took up their posts in mid August and will attend their first Council meeting as Council members on Oct. 29 to Nov. 1, 2012, in Honolulu. The new member from American Samoa is forthcoming.

Michael P. Duenas

Michael P. Duenas fills the the obligatory seat for Guam. He was born and raised on Guam and is an avid fishermen. He is employed at the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association. He began as an administrative assistant and currently holds the position of operations manager. The Association's nearly 200 members are mostly subsistence fishermen with a handful who can be considered commercial and recreational. His father is former Council member Manuel Duenas.

Michael K. Goto

Michael K. Goto fills the obligatory seat for Hawai'i. He has been an employee at the United Fishing Agency, Ltd. (UFA, i.e., the Honolulu fish auction) since 2007, serving in various positions including executive assistant, sales manager and auctioneer. This experience has made him knowledgeable in seafood marketing and quality. He also serves as a facility security coordinator of a secured shipping program in cooperation with Department of Homeland Security and is a member of the Hawaii Longline Association. He is the grandson of UFA manager Frank Goto, who has been with the company since its formation in 1952.

Ed Ebisui Jr.

Ed Ebisui Jr. of Hawai`i rejoins the Council filling an at-large seat. Ebisui formerly served as Council member 1987-1989, Council vice chair 1990-1993 and Council chair 1994-1996 and 2001-2007. He is an attorney, fisherman and member of the NOAA Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee.

David Itano stepped down from his Council membership as he takes up a new post with the National Marine Fisheries Service as the recreational fisheries coordinator for the Pacific Islands Regional Office. He will continue his association with the Council by serving as a member of its Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC).

Jim Lynch has also joined the SSC. His background is in regulatory compliance and environmental law. He has also served as a fishery scientist and policy advisor, an ESA Section 7 consultation coordinator and a law clerk for the US Departments of the Interior and Commerce.

2012 Council Calendar

www.wpcouncil.org

September

26
Fishermen's Workshop on ACLs and the MMPA, Lihue, Kaua'i

27
Fishermen's Workshop on ACLs and the MMPA, Hilo, Hawai'i

27 to Oct. 2
WCPFC Technical and Compliance Committee meeting, Pohnpei, FSM

29
Fishermen's Workshop on ACLs and the MMPA, Kona, Hawai'i

October

2

Fishermen's Workshop on ACLs and the MMPA, Kahului, Maui

2 to 3
CMSP Science Workshop, Honolulu

2 to 4
Native Hawaiian Convention, Honolulu

3
Fishermen's Workshop on ACLs and the MMPA, Honolulu

7
Hawaii Fishing and Seafood Festival, Honolulu

22 to 26
New Council Member Training, Washington, DC

24 to 26
111th Scientific and Statistical Committee meeting, Honolulu

29 to Nov. 1
155th Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council meeting, Honolulu

30
Fishers Forum, Honolulu

November

5 to 9
South Pacific Tuna Treaty negotiations, Solomon Islands

8
NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve Advisory Council meeting, Honolulu

26 to Dec. 2
International Pacific Marine Educators Network biennial conference, Santiago, Chile

30 to Dec. 2
Japan Sea Turtle Symposium, Kagoshima, Japan

December

3 to 7
Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission 9th Regular Session, Manila

Upcoming Events

Cultural Tent at the Hawaii Fishing & Seafood Festival

For the third year, the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will host a cultural tent at the festival, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 7, at Pier 38, Honolulu. Visit our tent to enjoy several items. Learn about the Aha Moku system, with special guests from Moku O Kahekili (Maui). Become acquainted with the national First Stewards initiative, bringing US Pacific islanders, Alaskan Natives and American Indians together to address climate change and other impacts to indigenous communities and cultures. View the winning photo-essays and artwork on climate change and traditional knowledge from our students. Vote on emerging topics in fisheries management, including potentially increasing the minimum harvest size for commercial 'ahi and making changes to the commercial fishing and reporting requirements.

111th Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) Meeting

The SSC will meet 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 24 to 26 at the Council office, 1164 Bishop St., Suite 1400, Honolulu. The major agenda items are research planning for the NMFS Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and setting acceptable biological catches (ABCs) for federally managed bottomfish, crustaceans and precious coral for American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and Hawai'i (for Hawai'i bottomfish, non-Deep 7 only).

155th Council Meeting

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council will meet at the Laniakea YWCA-Fuller Hall, 1040 Richards St., Honolulu, Oct. 29 to Nov. 1. The major agenda items are PIFSC research planning and setting annual catch limits for American Samoa, Guam, CNMI and Hawai'i based on the ABCs set by the SSC (see above). For a complete agenda, go to www.wpcouncil.org/meetings.

Fishers Forum: "Tuna, Tuna, Tuna"

FISHERS FORUM Hawaii

Fishermen, their 'ohana and other community members are invited to join this family friendly event from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 30, at the Harbor View Center, upstairs from Nico's at Pier 38, Honolulu. Join the discussion on 'ahi minimum harvest size and resident stock, Pacific aku and fisheries development, and purse-seine fisheries research. Featured speakers are tuna researcher David Itano and Peter Wilson, author of *AKU! The History of Tuna Fishing in Hawaii and the Western Pacific.* Enjoy free parking, refreshment, prizes, informational tables (including new USCG safety exam, see below) and more!

Safety Exams Now Required for All Vessels That Sell Fish

Beginning Oct. 16, 2012, the United States Coast Guard (USCG) will be requiring that all commercial fishing, fish tender and fish processing vessels operating beyond 3 nautical miles of shore undertake a mandatory safety examination in order to ensure compliance with existing safety regulations found in 46 CFR Part 28. The examination requirement stems from the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 and applies to commercial fishing vessels regardless if State-registered or federally documented.

So how does this effect fishing vessels in the Western Pacific Region? Using Hawai`i's small vessel pelagic fleet as an example, even if the State of Hawai`i does not require vessels to be registered as commercial fishing vessels, it is our understanding that if the vessel owner has a State of Hawai`i–issued commercial marine license, then the USCG safety examination requirement applies. This is because these USCG regulations apply to all vessels selling catch.

The USCG is requesting that vessel owners make arrangements for an examination with the local USCG Sector, Marine Safety Unit, or Field Office. Examples of the types of safety equipment that may be required for your vessel include, but not limited to, personal flotation devices, ring life buoys, survival craft, EPIRBs and fire extinguishers. For more information on this issue, visit www.fishsafe.info or contact your local USCG office.

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